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2025

# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

LAMAR, COLORADO



**CITY OF LAMAR**

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**YOUR INPUT PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN GUIDING THE FUTURE OF LAMAR'S PARKS AND RECREATION!**

Report Prepared By



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# INTRODUCTION

The City of Lamar, located in the heart of southeastern Colorado, is a community defined by resilience, heritage, and a growing vision for the future. Today, Lamar stands at a pivotal moment, ready to invest in a healthier, more connected, and more inclusive future through the development of an updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a community-driven initiative designed to enhance the quality of life for all Lamar residents by expanding access to parks, trails, and recreational opportunities. Building on the momentum of the 2015 Master Plan and aligned with the City's recent Comprehensive Plan efforts, this document reflects a renewed commitment to equity, sustainability, and long-term vitality. The plan is informed by robust community engagement, including partnerships with local youth, seniors, and historically underserved populations, ensuring that every voice is heard and every neighborhood is represented. Early on in the process, staff and council directed Ayres to focus Plan efforts on reinvesting in existing parks, rather than identifying and designing new areas. This sentiment is reflected throughout the Plan.

Ultimately, the Plan reflects Lamar's belief that access to recreation is not a luxury, but a necessity for building a thriving, equitable, and vibrant community for generations to come.

## GOALS

The Lamar Recreation Master Plan is guided by a set of strategic goals, initially defined by the Comprehensive Plan. These goals, listed below, provided a starting point for the direction that the Plan moved in.

- 1. Outdoor Recreation:** Expand outdoor recreation opportunities to promote active lifestyles and community wellness.
- 2. Year-Round Indoor Recreation:** Develop and improve indoor facilities to provide consistent recreational access regardless of weather.
- 3. Tourism Promotion:** Leverage Lamar's natural beauty and cultural assets to attract visitors and support the local economy.
- 4. Adventure Programming:** Introduce dynamic outdoor adventure experiences that celebrate Lamar's unique landscape.
- 5. Community Recreation & Events:** Strengthen community bonds through inclusive recreational programming and events.

Through public engagement efforts, client meetings, and continued work on the Plan, these goals further evolved into the finalized principles that ultimately gave the Plan shape and direction:



Through these goals, the future of Lamar's Parks and Recreation programs and facilities is tailored to meet the needs of the community while remaining pragmatic, realistic, and forward-thinking.

## PLAN FUNDING SOURCE

The Lamar Recreation Master Plan is made possible through a strategic blend of grant funding, local investment, and community-driven in-kind support. At the heart of this effort is a successful grant award from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), which contributes significantly to the planning and engagement process.

### Total Project Value: \$327,500

- **GOCO GRANT CONTRIBUTION: \$155,000**
  - » GOCO funds are allocated to cover the core planning activities, including hiring a consultant, conducting facility and program audits, integrating the Comprehensive Plan, and facilitating robust community engagement.
- **CASH MATCH FROM THE CITY OF LAMAR: \$80,965**
  - » This local investment demonstrates the City's commitment to the plan and supports additional engagement activities, youth involvement, and event coordination.
- **IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS: \$91,535**
  - » A wide range of community partners, including Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Lamar Chamber of Commerce, Lamar High School, DECA, and Lamar Community College, have pledged volunteer time, event support, and resources. These contributions reflect strong local ownership and collaboration.

### USE OF FUNDS

Funding is strategically distributed across several categories:

- **Consultant Services:** Development of the master plan, including technical assessments, financial reviews, and final documentation.
- **Community Engagement:** Public engagement events such as Oktoberfest, Cinco de Mayo, fishing tournaments, and youth soccer programs are planned to gather input. This ensures that the final product is useful, relevant, and driven by the true needs of the community.
- **Youth Involvement:** The formation of a Student Advisory Committee, which provides paid involvement for students from Lamar High School, provides another way for the community to directly impact the Plan.
- **Inclusive Outreach:** Materials and events are designed to reach diverse populations, with bilingual resources and culturally relevant programming.

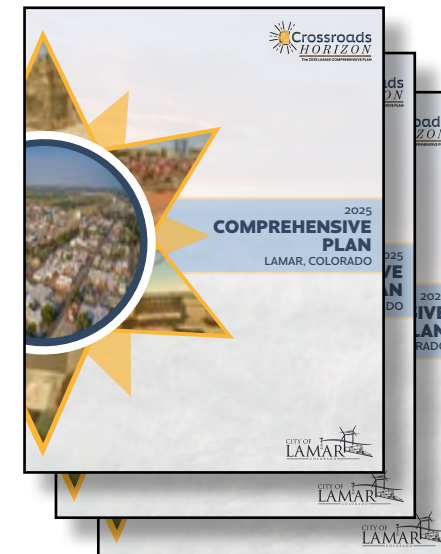


## PREVIOUS RELATED EFFORTS



### 2015 LAMAR PARKS, TRAILS, & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

In 2015, the City of Lamar adopted its first comprehensive Parks, Trails, and Recreation Master Plan; a visionary document created in close collaboration with residents, stakeholders, and planning experts. The purpose of that plan was to address pressing health and accessibility challenges in the community by reimagining Lamar's built environment and promoting active lifestyles. It emphasized the importance of walkability, connectivity, and inclusive public spaces, and was deeply rooted in the belief that parks and recreation are essential to both physical well-being and community vitality.



### 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City of Lamar 2025 Comprehensive Plan is the community's primary long-range planning document, guiding growth, development, and public investment over the next five to ten years. Created through a robust, community-led engagement process, the plan establishes a shared vision for Lamar's future and outlines goals, strategies, and action steps across key topic areas including land use, housing, economic development, transportation, public facilities, resiliency, tourism, and quality of life.

The Comprehensive Plan features a brief chapter on Parks and Recreation - this 2025 Parks and Recreation Master Plan serves as an in-depth extension of ideas presented in the larger document.

## YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Youth involvement remained a priority throughout the planning process and was utilized through the formation of a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). This group brings together students from local schools and youth organizations to provide insight, feedback, and creative ideas throughout the planning process.

Throughout the planning process, the YAC participated in brainstorming sessions, and public engagement sessions to make their mark on the Plan. As part of the GOCO grant that was awarded to help fund this project, members of the YAC were financially compensated for their time. These young leaders amplified the voices of their fellow community members and subsequently helped ensure that the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of younger residents while also fostering leadership, civic engagement, and a sense of ownership in the community's public spaces.

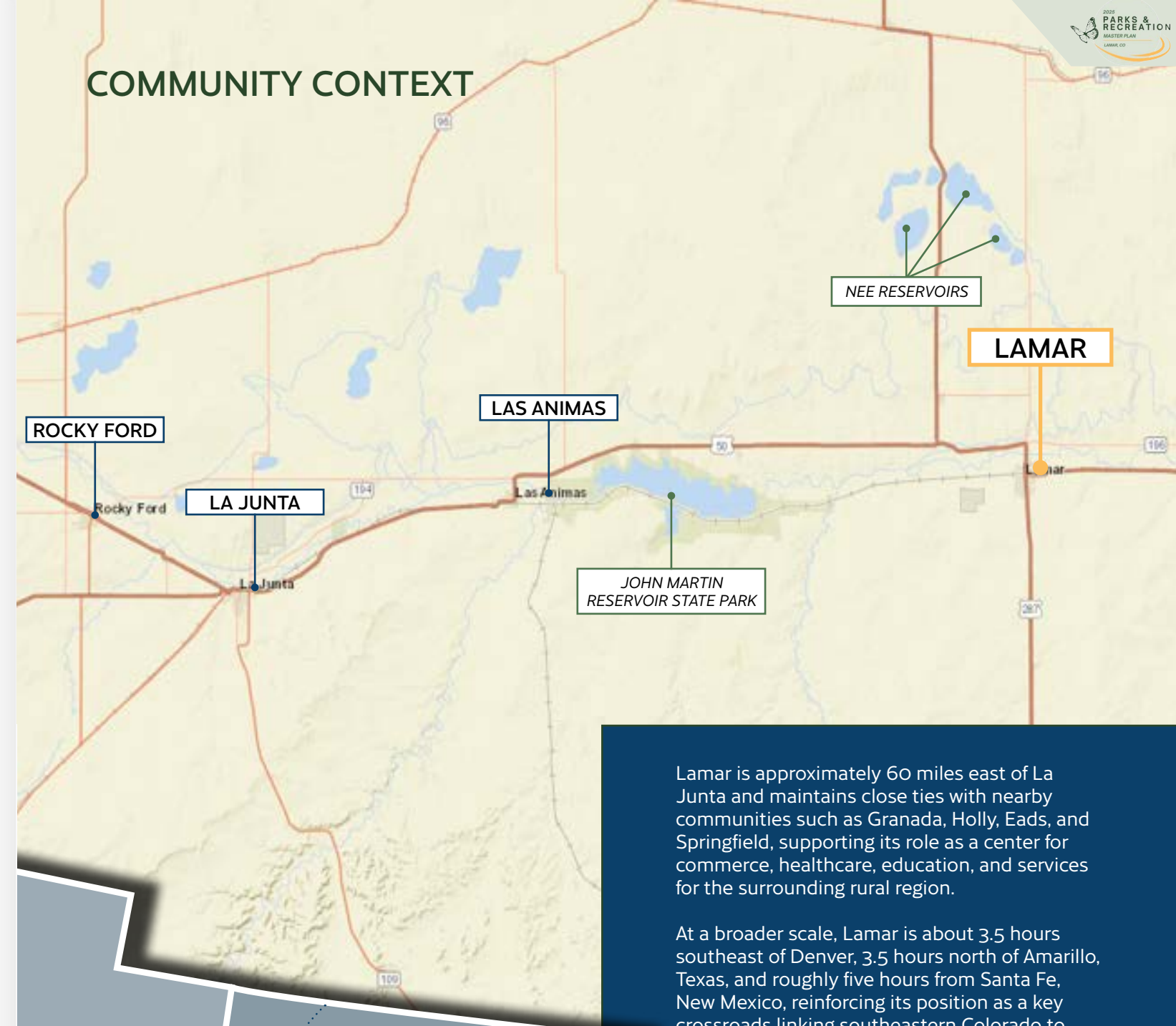


# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Lamar, Colorado, is a community located in the southeastern plains of the state. As the seat of Prowers County, Lamar serves as a regional center for agriculture, education, and civic life. With a population of approximately 7,500, the city is known for its strong sense of identity, cultural diversity, and commitment to creating a vibrant and healthy future for all residents.

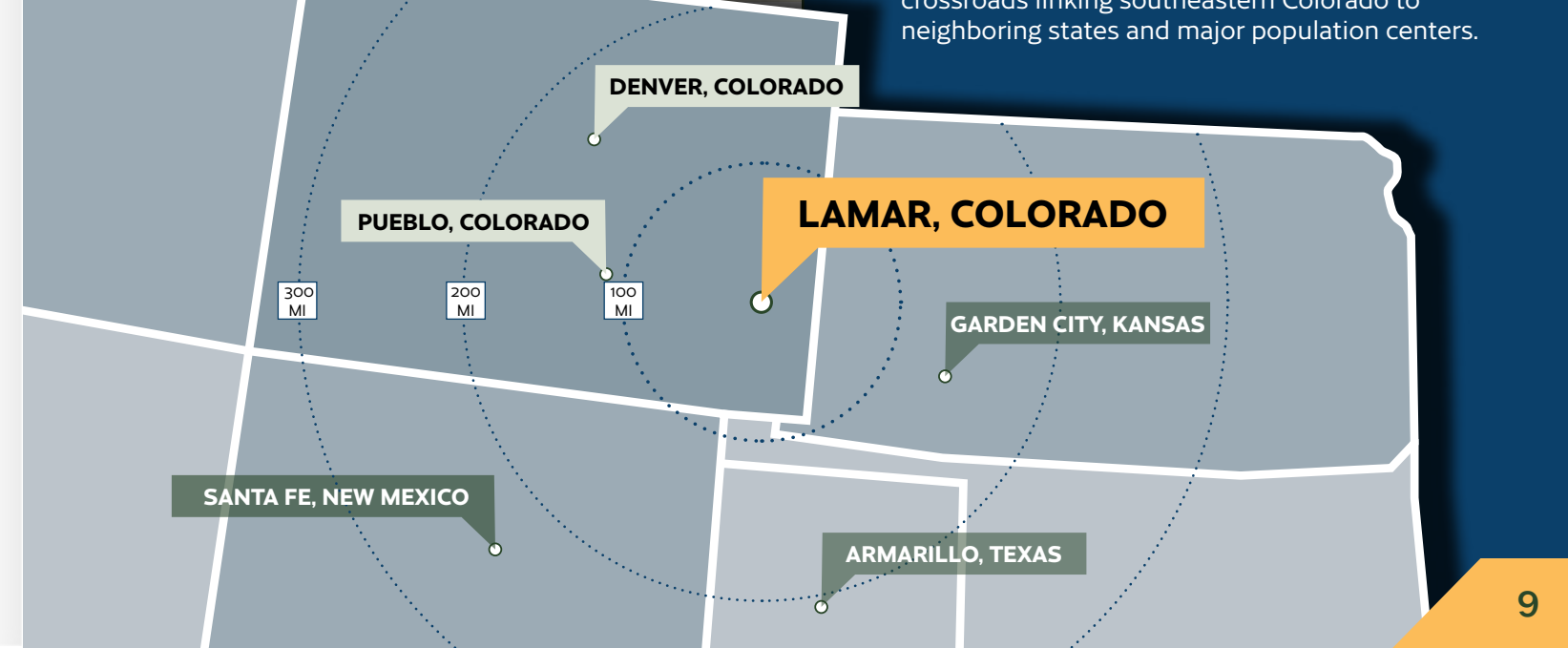
The city's character is largely shaped by its agricultural heritage and proximity to natural assets like the Arkansas River and Willow Creek. Lamar's parks, trails, and open spaces are deeply valued by the community and play a vital role in supporting recreation, wellness, and social connection. Recent improvements, such as North Gateway Park and the growing Lamar Loop trail system, reflect the city's dedication to enhancing outdoor access and quality of life.

Residents have shown a strong commitment to shaping their public spaces through grassroots engagement, youth leadership, and collaborative planning. The Recreation Master Plan builds on this energy, ensuring that Lamar's parks and programs reflect the values, needs, and aspirations of the people who call it home.



Lamar is approximately 60 miles east of La Junta and maintains close ties with nearby communities such as Granada, Holly, Eads, and Springfield, supporting its role as a center for commerce, healthcare, education, and services for the surrounding rural region.

At a broader scale, Lamar is about 3.5 hours southeast of Denver, 3.5 hours north of Amarillo, Texas, and roughly five hours from Santa Fe, New Mexico, reinforcing its position as a key crossroads linking southeastern Colorado to neighboring states and major population centers.

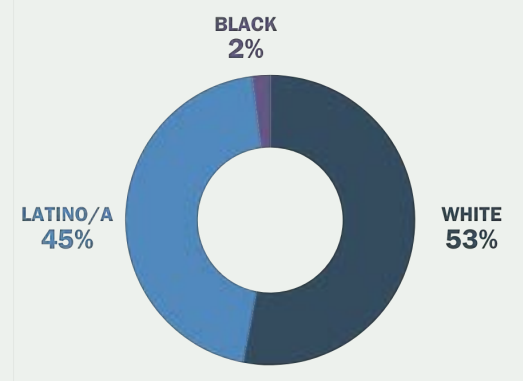
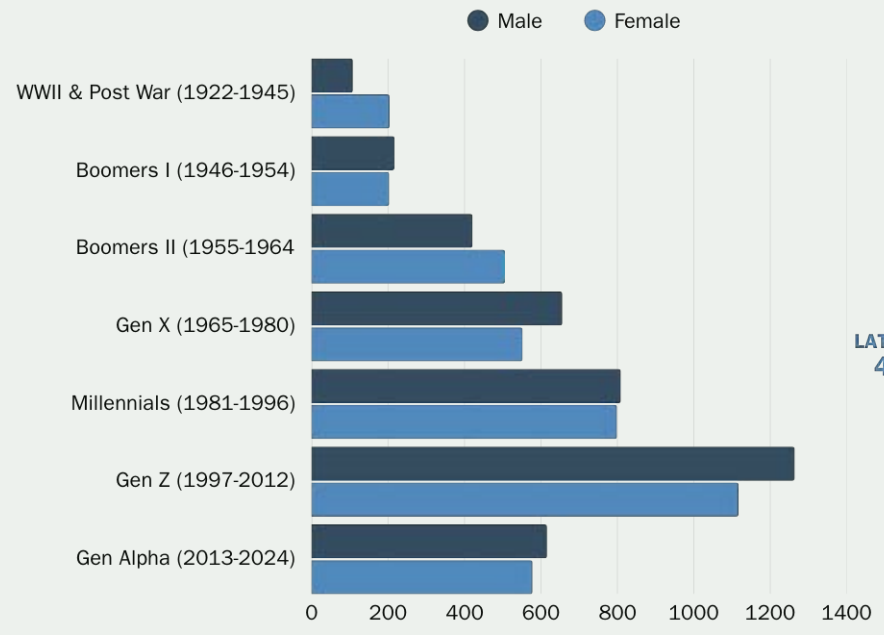
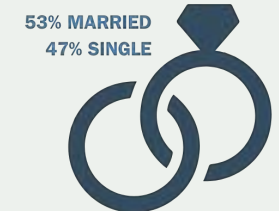
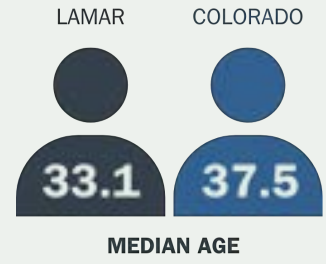
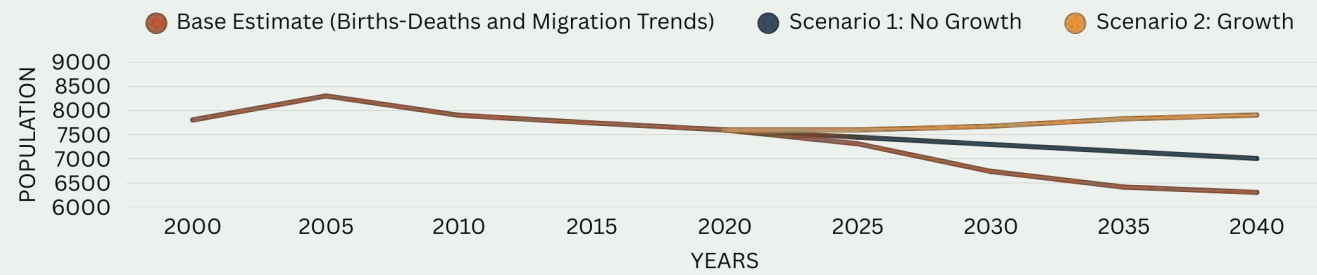


# DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

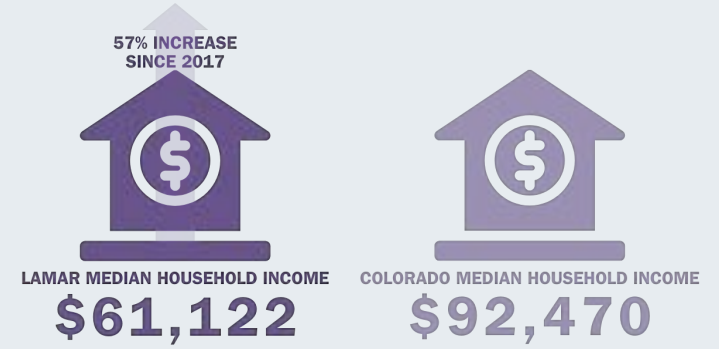
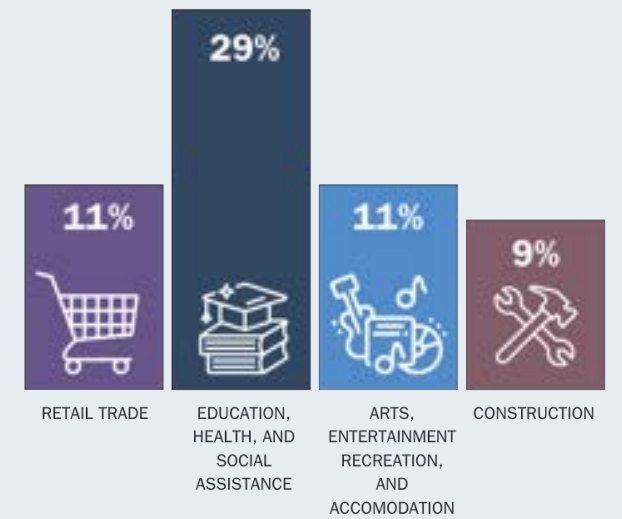
Understanding who lives in Lamar is essential to planning parks and recreation services that are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to community needs. Below, view a high-level overview of the city's population characteristics, including age distribution, household composition, cultural diversity, and other key indicators that shape how residents engage with public spaces.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

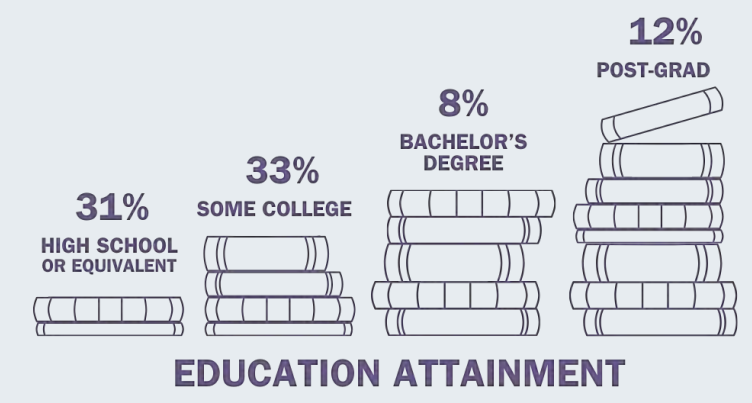
### POPULATION PROJECTION



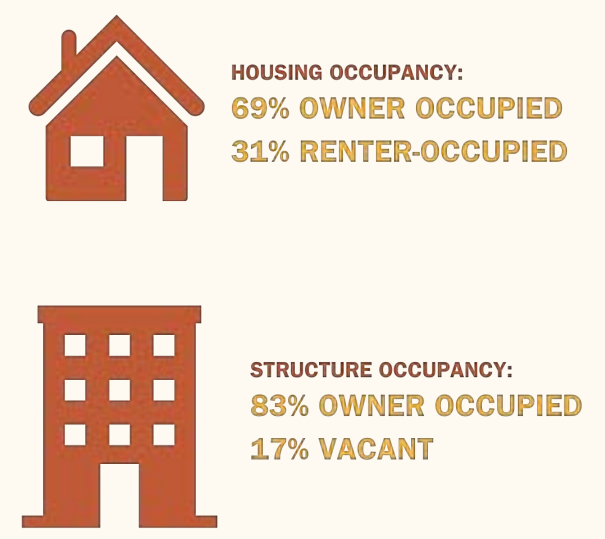
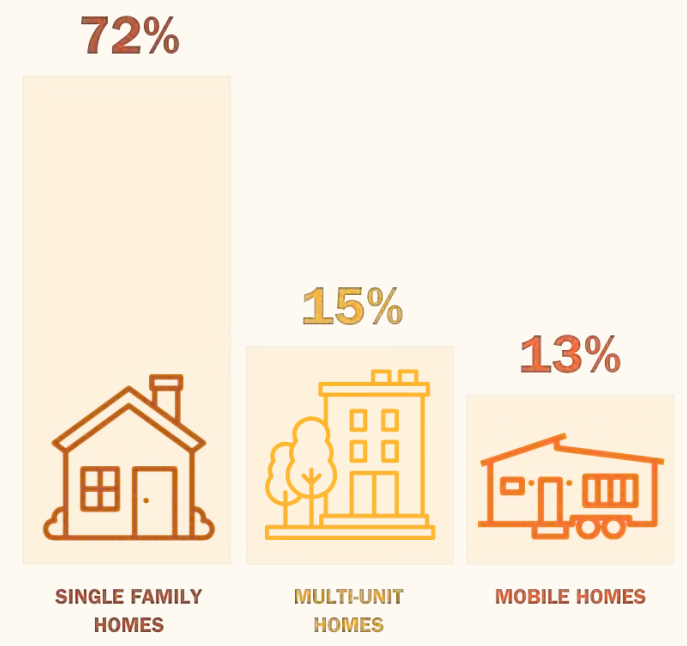
## ECONOMICS



### TOP INDUSTRIES



## HOUSING



# RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

The research and analysis phase provides the foundation for understanding Lamar's current conditions, community priorities, and future needs. This section synthesizes input gathered through a robust series of public engagement sessions, including community events, meetings, and stakeholder conversations, along with results from a community-wide survey designed to capture a broad range of perspectives. In addition, an age cohort analysis examines the community's demographic composition and trends to better understand how needs and preferences may vary across life stages.

Together, these efforts ensure that the planning process is informed by both quantitative data and meaningful community input, grounding recommendations in a clear understanding of who Lamar is today and how it is changing.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement is a cornerstone of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It ensures that the voices, experiences, and ideas of Lamar residents are at the heart of every recommendation and decision.

By actively involving the community through events, surveys, and other initiatives, the planning process becomes more inclusive, transparent, and responsive to real needs. Engaging the public helps build trust, foster collaboration, and create a shared vision for the future of Lamar's parks and recreation system; one that reflects the values and aspirations of the people who use it every day.

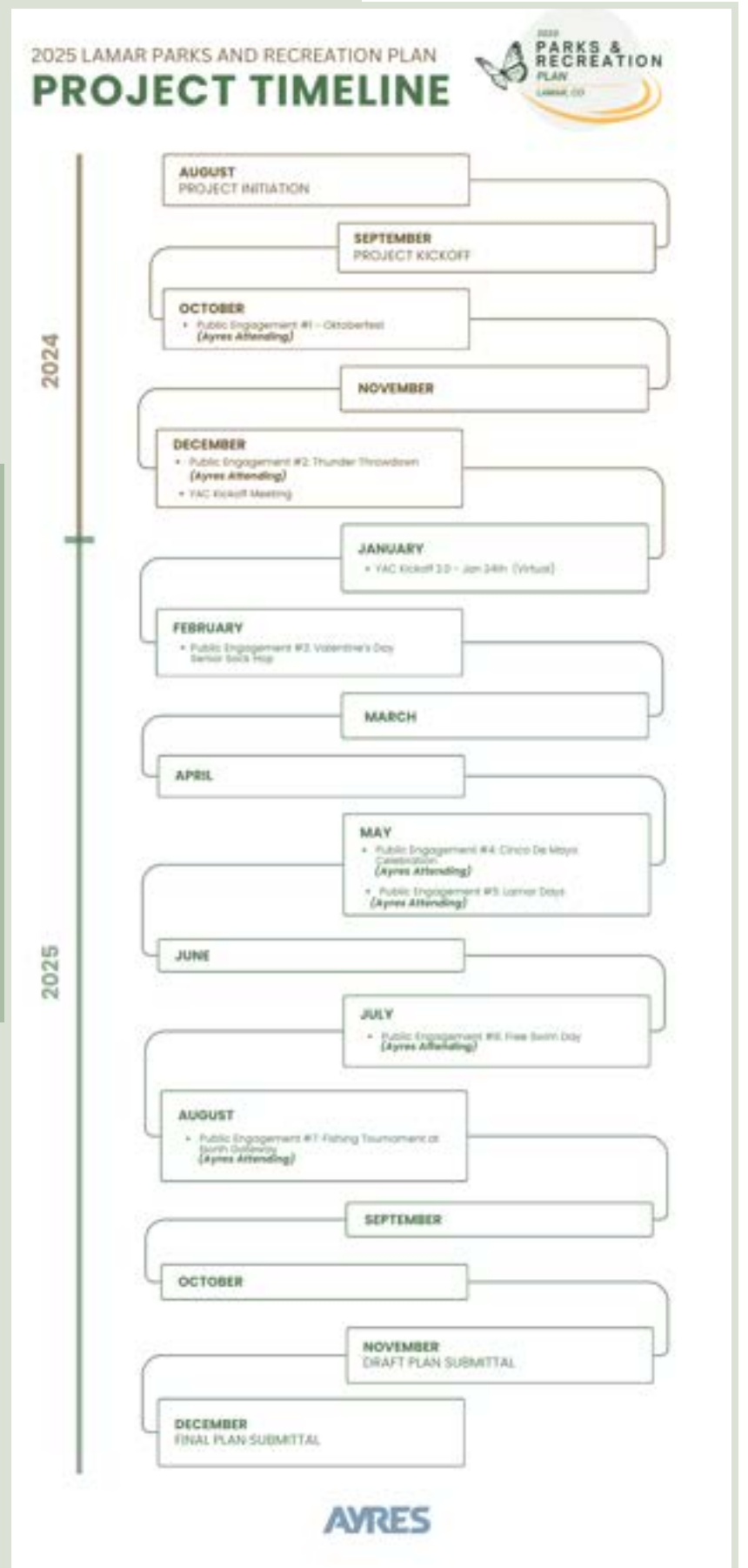
As a primary part of the public engagement process, seven major events were held between October 2024 and August 2025 to help spread the word about the Plan and gather public feedback.

1. Oktoberfest - October 5, 2025
2. Thunder Throwdown - December 7, 2024
3. Senior Sock Hop - February 13, 2025
4. Cinco De Mayo - May 5, 2025
5. Lamar Days - May 17th, 2025
6. Free Swim Day - July 12, 2025
7. Fishing Tournament - August 16, 2025

See the following pages for details and key takeaways for each event.



Detailed Public Engagement Summaries for each event can be found in Appendix A.



**EVENT 1: OKTOBERFEST (OCTOBER 5, 2024)**



Held during the Lamar Chamber’s annual Oktoberfest, this event featured interactive boards, dot voting exercises, and park mapping activities. Residents were invited to share ideas, identify goals, and identify frequently used parks.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Strong interest in Outdoor Recreation, Year-Round Indoor Recreation, and Community Events Programming.
- Popular parks included Willow Creek and North Gateway.
- Participants requested more activities for teens, shaded seating, and accessible walking paths.

**EVENT 2: THUNDER THROWDOWN (DECEMBER 7, 2024)**



A booth was set up at the high school basketball tournament to engage youth and families. Attendees could write or draw ideas, talk with Youth Advisory Committee members, and take the community survey.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Frustration with park maintenance and limited programming for teens.
- Desire to improve existing facilities rather than build new ones.
- Youth Advisory Committee held its kickoff meeting, discussing goals and future engagement strategies.

**EVENT 3: SENIOR SOCK HOP (FEB 13, 2025)**



This themed dance event was designed to engage Lamar’s senior population. Youth Advisory Committee members helped host, serve food, and collect feedback through surveys and conversations. A survey was also published with questions specific to ages 65+.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Most-used parks: Willow Creek and North Gateway.
- Requests for low-impact activities like pickleball, mini-golf, and cornhole.
- Mixed feedback on accessibility, with concerns about uneven terrain and limited handicap parking.

**EVENT 4: CINCO DE MAYO (MAY 5, 2025)**



Held during Lamar’s annual Cinco de Mayo festival, this engagement focused on connecting with the city’s Spanish-speaking population. Ayres Associates set up a bilingual booth with dot voting exercise boards and distributed themed coloring pages to engage children and families.

**Key Takeaways:**

- The indoor pool again emerged as the top priority, along with pickleball courts, disc golf, a dog park, and playgrounds for young children.
- Residents reported frequent use of the parks system and appreciation for Lamar’s variety of events.
- The shade provided by the Enchanted Forest was frequently praised, highlighting the value of natural comfort features.

**EVENT 5: LAMAR DAYS (MAY 17, 2025)**

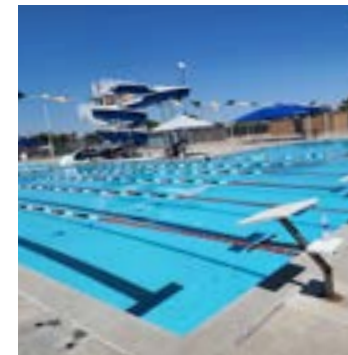


A booth the Lamar Days Rod Run at Willow Creek Park. The booth featured bilingual dot voting boards focused on future programming and maintenance needs. Attendees were invited to participate through interactive materials. The engagement centered on gathering feedback specific to Willow Creek Park.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Indoor pool was the most requested amenity, followed by pickleball courts, a public amphitheater, and playground equipment.
- Willow Creek Park is highly valued, but the disrepair of historical features was noted as a concern.
- Interest in expanding the Lamar Loop was expressed, especially for personal exercise use.

**EVENT 6: FREE SWIM DAY (JULY 12, 2025)**



This engagement took place during Free Swim Day at the Lamar Swimming Pool, attracting a diverse group including families, children, and visitors from other towns. The booth featured dot voting boards and project information, with a focus on pool facilities and broader parks programming.

**Key Takeaways:**

- Strong demand for an indoor pool to support year-round swimming and sports, though cost constraints make it impractical in the near term.
- The outdoor pool is beloved, but maintenance improvements are needed to sustain its performance.
- The event reinforced the importance of accessible, well-maintained aquatic facilities in the community.

**EVENT 7: FISHING TOURNAMENT (AUGUST 16, 2025)**



A community fishing tournament was held at North Gateway Ponds on August 16, 2024. The event served as a platform to gather feedback specifically about North Gateway Park. Dot voting boards were displayed, and conversations were held in a relaxed, nature-focused setting. A raffle prize incentivized participation, with entries earned by catching fish.

**Key Takeaways:**

- North Gateway Ponds are cherished for their proximity to town and natural feel, with popular activities including fishing, walking, running, and water sports.
- Residents appreciate amenities like the swim beach, aquatic sports rentals, fishing docks, and the new dog park.
- There is a strong preference to keep the area natural and minimally developed, despite appreciation for recent improvements like docks and ADA parking.
- Concerns include dust on windy days and a lack of shade, suggesting a need for more shade structures and plantings.



**KEY TAKEAWAYS**



**01 REINVEST IN EXISTING RESOURCES & FACILITIES**  
 Lamar wants its parks cared for: safer paths, better shade, accessible features, and well-maintained spaces that show pride in what's already there.

**02 EXPAND INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE PROGRAMMING**  
 From teens looking for things to do to seniors wanting low-impact fun, the community is calling for programming that brings people together.

**03 STRENGTHEN AMENITIES WHILE PRESERVING NATURAL CHARACTER**  
 Residents want more outdoor recreation, balanced with keeping treasured natural areas feeling natural.

## COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

As part of the planning process, Ayres Associates conducted a community-wide survey to gather input on how residents use parks and recreation facilities, what they value most, and where they see opportunities for improvement. The survey ran from December 6, 2024 to November 26, 2025.

Over this time, it received 165 responses, reflecting a broad cross-section of Lamar's population. It was distributed digitally and publicized at each engagement event through flyers, posters, and customized seed packets.

The survey included both multiple-choice and open-ended questions, covering topics such as:

- Most-used parks and what people like or dislike about them
- Satisfaction with recreation facilities and programs
- Activities and needs of youth and seniors
- Safety perceptions in parks and public spaces
- Suggestions for missing programs, amenities, and improvements

Surveys are a strategic public engagement tool because they allow residents to share their experiences anonymously and at their convenience. This approach helped to capture a wide range of perspectives, including those who may not attend public meetings or events. The insights gathered through this survey directly inform the priorities, recommendations, and design strategies outlined in the Master Plan.

### Q1: WHICH PARK IN LAMAR DO YOU USE THE MOST? WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST AND LEAST ABOUT THIS PARK?

Key Takeaways:

- **Most-used:** Willow Creek Park, North Gateway Ponds, Escondido Park, Baseball Field Park
- **Liked:** Shade, walking paths, playground variety, water access, proximity to home
- **Concerns:** Outdated equipment, lack of restrooms, poor lighting, safety concerns, maintenance issues (e.g., stickers, dying trees)

"Court space is hard to come by in fall and winter. Field space is hard to come by in spring and summer. These are good challenges because they mean kids are active."

### Q2: WHERE DO YOU TYPICALLY GO FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS? DOES THE FACILITY MEET YOUR NEEDS? IF NOT, WHY?

Key Takeaways:

- **Common venues:** Community Building, Lamar Pool, Escondido Park, Lamar Community College
- **Needs met:** Basic fitness and sports programming
- **Gaps:** Lack of gym space, limited pool access, outdated equipment, need for indoor facilities and inclusive programming



"Willow Creek Park—great shade and comfortable grass. Play area is updated. Sad to see so many trees dying at a rapid rate."

### Q3: WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE DO IN THE COMMUNITY? WHERE DO THEY TYPICALLY GO FOR FUN?

Key Takeaways:

- **Current activities:** Skate park, sports, pool (seasonal), bowling, walking/scootering
- **Concerns:** Few structured programs, limited indoor options, financial barriers
- **Suggestions:** Teen center, arcade, roller skating, splash pad, indoor pool, youth sports camps

"There isn't much for youth to get involved in. There's a bold line between fortunate and unfortunate families in this town."

### Q4: WHAT DO SENIORS DO IN THE COMMUNITY? WHERE DO THEY TYPICALLY GO FOR FUN?

Key Takeaways:

- **Common venues:** Senior Center, walking trails, bingo, golf, church groups
- **Concerns:** Limited programming, social disconnect, accessibility issues
- **Suggestions:** Chair exercises, Silver Sneakers, pickleball, inclusive walking paths, intergenerational activities

"Honestly, I am unaware of anything for seniors. My grandparents are entirely disconnected from the community."

### Q5: WHAT PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY IS MISSING IN LAMAR?

Key Takeaways:

- **Most requested:** Indoor pool, pickleball courts, dog park, splash pad
- **Other ideas:** Art classes, equine programs, square dancing, ninja warrior course, disc golf expansion, community garden, youth hangout spaces

"An indoor pool that can be used year-round would bring a lot more entertainment to the community."

### Q6: DO YOU FEEL SAFE AT CITY OF LAMAR PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES? WHY OR WHY NOT?

Key Takeaways:

- **Majority feel safe**, especially during the day
- **Concerns:** Drug activity, loitering, poor lighting, aggressive dogs, unsafe restrooms
- **Suggestions:** Better lighting, emergency call boxes, increased patrols, enforcement of leash laws

"Yes, but I know women who don't feel as safe at night. Maybe better lights or emergency call boxes?"

### Q7: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE US TO KNOW ABOUT THE EXISTING PARKS SYSTEM IN LAMAR?

Key Takeaways:

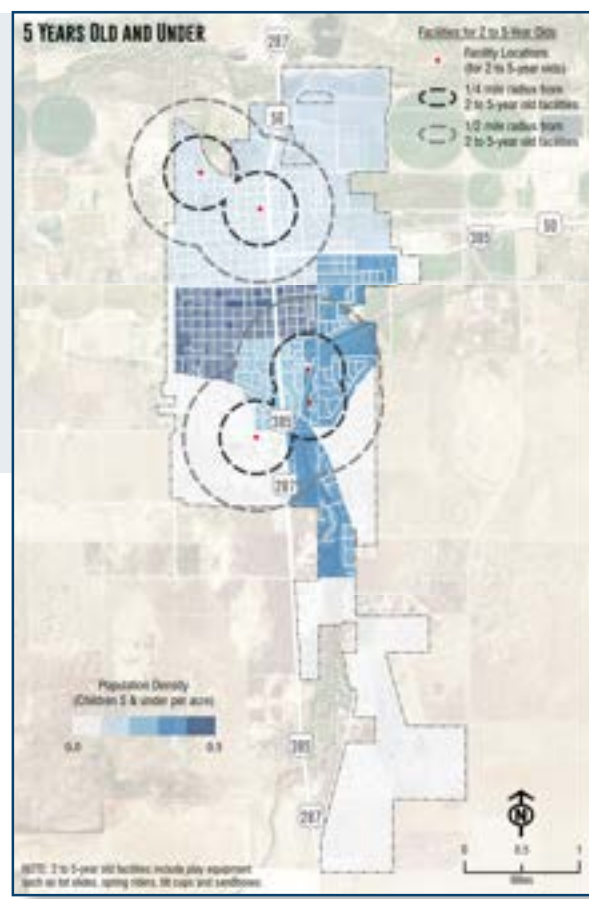
- **Maintenance needs:** Restroom upgrades, grass and tree care, graffiti removal
- **Infrastructure suggestions:** Improved signage, shaded seating, water stations, better parking
- **Community sentiment:** Appreciation for parks staff and recent improvements; desire for modernization and follow-through on promised projects

"[The parks staff] are doing a great job making offerings and finding workable solutions in our community. Keep up the great work!"

# AGE COHORT ANALYSIS

Understanding the age distribution of Lamar's population is essential for planning parks and recreation services that meet the needs of all residents. By analyzing age cohorts across the community, we can identify where specific age groups are concentrated and tailor programming, amenities, and infrastructure accordingly. Additionally, it is vital to identify gaps in service areas to ensure that developed recommendations help minimize areas without adequate coverage.

The following maps illustrate the spatial distribution of key age groups, helping to inform decisions about equitable access, future facility locations, and age-appropriate recreational opportunities. The study focuses on age groups that are most likely to be underserved: **Babies/Toddlers (Under 5)**, **Young Children (Ages 5-9)**, **Teens (Ages 10-17)**, and **Older Adults (Ages 55+)**.



## < 5 YEARS OLD

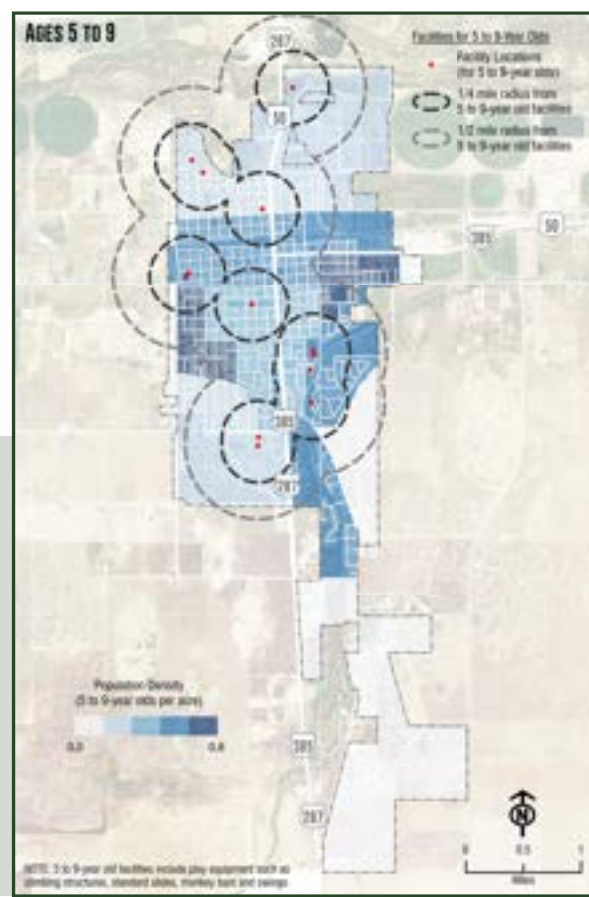
*Facilities for this age group include play equipment such as tot slides, spring riders, tilt cups, and sandboxes.*

This map, which focuses on the youngest members of Lamar's population, shows 5 facility locations that would service this age group. The spread of these locations covers both the north and south sides of town, but lacks coverage in central parts of Lamar where the population density of this age group is highest. This suggests a distinct service gap for families with young children, causing many families to need to walk over a 1/2 mile to park facilities, or drive if they are able.

## AGES 5-9

*Facilities for this age group include play equipment such as climbing structures, standard slides, monkey bars, and swings.*

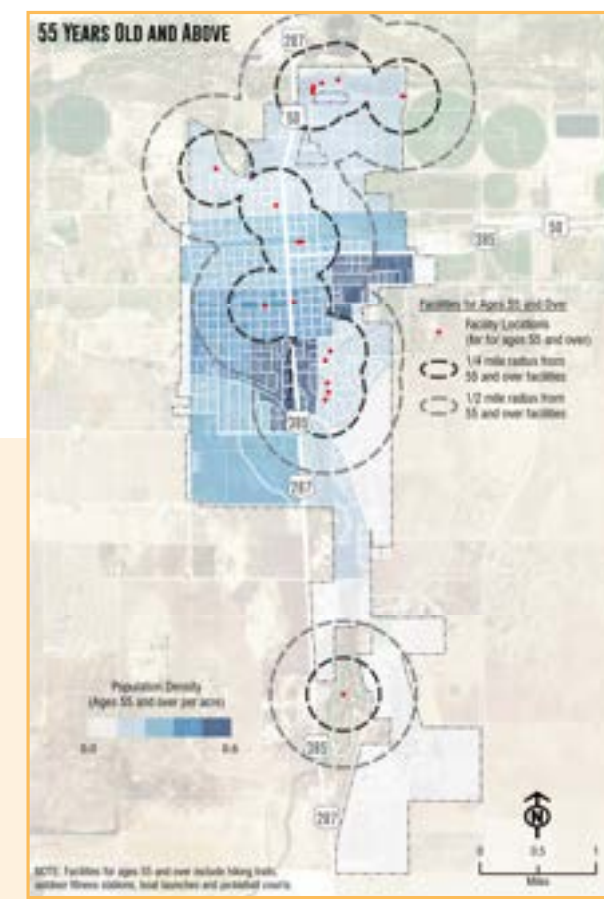
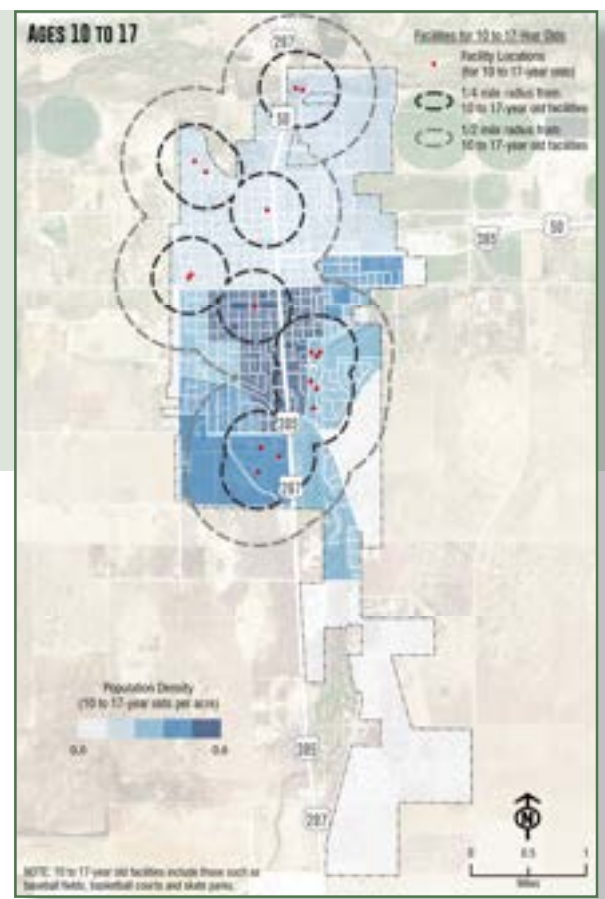
This map, which focuses on young children, shows 13 locations that provide facilities suitable for this age group. This number illustrates a broad spectrum of options for young families to choose from. Most of the areas with dense populations of children ages 5-9 have access to park facilities within a 1/2 mile, with the exception of a dense grouping on the east side of Lamar.



## AGES 10-17

*Facilities for this age group include baseball fields, basketball courts, athletic facilities, and skate parks.*

This map, detailing the teen population of Lamar, shows 17 locations that serve this age group. This large number indicates a vast amount of coverage throughout the bulk of Lamar. The most densely populated areas of town for this age group, primarily in central Lamar, have excellent coverage. Most facilities that align with the needs of teens are within a 1/4 mile, meaning that many individuals would be able to walk or bike to these areas.



## AGES 55 YEARS AND ABOVE

*Facilities for this age group include hiking trails, outdoor fitness stations, boat launches, and pickleball courts.*

This map, focused on older adults, depicts 14 facilities that align with the needs of the 55+ community. The spread of these facilities provides a wide amount of coverage across the community for this age group. With the majority of this population living in central Lamar, it appears that most of these facilities are within walking or driving distance.

### KEY ACTION ITEMS

- Prioritize new or enhanced neighborhood-serving parks in central and northern Lamar.** These areas consistently show the highest density of children, youth, teens, and older adults, yet several neighborhoods remain underserved. Investments here will benefit the widest range of residents across all age groups.
- Improve walkable access to age-appropriate amenities, especially for younger children and older adults.** Large residential blocks fall outside of comfortable walking distance to parks with playgrounds, courts, trails, and passive recreation features. Addressing these gaps should be a core strategy, given the mobility limitations of these age groups.
- Align park amenities more intentionally with the demographic characteristics of surrounding neighborhoods.** There are mismatches between who lives near a park and what amenities exist (e.g., youth-heavy areas without sports courts, older-adult areas lacking trails or shade). Updating or retrofitting parks to meet local needs will improve equity, relevance, and overall use.

## BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

As part of the Lamar Recreation Plan Development, Ballard\*King & Associates (B\*K) conducted fundamental benchmarking with peer communities that had similarities to Lamar. The project team reviewed possible peer cities with similar contexts and population characteristics to identify organizations that are both comparable and, in some ways, aspirational for the City of Lamar's Recreation Department. This benchmark process provides quantitative comparison of each organization's assets, funding and operations compared to the City of Lamar. However, benchmark data is provided to serve as a reference point to inform decisions and is not intended to imply or rank one city as better than another.

This section provides an overview of data collected within the Benchmarking Analysis, however, concise recommendations are located on page 35.



### PEER CITY SELECTION

To identify comparable organizations, the project team looked at criteria including:

- City population size and growth trend
- Geographic location within Colorado plains
- Key demographic, social and economic indicators as identified by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)

Based on this analysis, four potential peer cities were identified:

1. Alamosa, CO (Parks and Recreation Department)
2. La Junta, CO (Parks and Recreation Department)
3. Sterling, CO (Parks, Library and Recreation Department)\*
4. Trinidad, CO (Parks and Recreation Department)

\*Sterling was not able to respond to inquiries due to personnel being on extended leave.

Final selection of peer communities was approved by the City of Lamar. The three outside responding park and recreation agencies are different in terms of organizational size and structure, operating budget, system assets, and history. But each has best practices to offer as the planning team and department leadership look to other systems for models and inspiration.

### PEER CITY INFORMATION SOURCES

As previously mentioned, B\*K utilized ESRI data for demographic information. In addition, a survey was developed by the Project Team and electronically distributed to the Recreation Directors of each peer community. The survey asked for information regarding funding sources, operational practices, successes and challenges encountered by each organization. Each Recreation Director and organization responded within their capabilities. Information regarding staffing, budget, number of amenities, and operations for the City of Lamar was provided by the City of Lamar's Director of Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries, Anthony LaTour. As previously indicated, one organization, the City of Sterling, was unable to respond.

## TERMINOLOGY

- **Acre(s)/Acreage** - An acre is a unit of area commonly used in the United States to measure land. One acre = 43,560 square feet. Visual reference: an acre is roughly the size of a football field, minus the end zones.
- **Square Mile** - is used to measure large tracts of land. It represents the area of a square that is one mile long on each side. One square mile = 640 acres.
- **Median** - the middle point. It's the value where half the people (or households, or income, etc.) are above it and half are below it. For example: median household income - half of households earn more than this amount, and half earn less; median age - half the population is older than this age, and half is younger.
- **Contracted Services** - are tasks or programs that a department hires outside companies or individuals to perform instead of using city staff, such as landscaping, facility maintenance, or specialized programs.
- **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)** - is a way to measure staffing by combining full-time and part-time employees into one simple number. For example, two part-time employees who each work half the hours of a full-time schedule (each) would equal 1.0 FTE. Personnel and staffing rates vary widely across recreation departments, driven by operating philosophy, the amenity mix (e.g., indoor vs. outdoor), and the service-delivery model (in-house staffing, contractors, or volunteers).
- **Diamond Field** - A diamond field is a four-sided, diamond-shaped playing area used for baseball or softball, with field sizes that vary based on the sport, age group, and level of play.
- **Rectangle Field** - a rectangular-shaped field used for sports like soccer, football, or lacrosse, with goals or end zones at each end. Rectangle field sizes vary depending on the sport and age group.
- **General Fund** - a city's general fund is its main operating account that pays for basic services like police, fire, parks, public works, and administration using revenues such as taxes and fees.
- **Cost Recovery** - is a percentage that shows how much of the department's expenses are covered by the revenue it generates, indicating the balance between user fees and public subsidy.

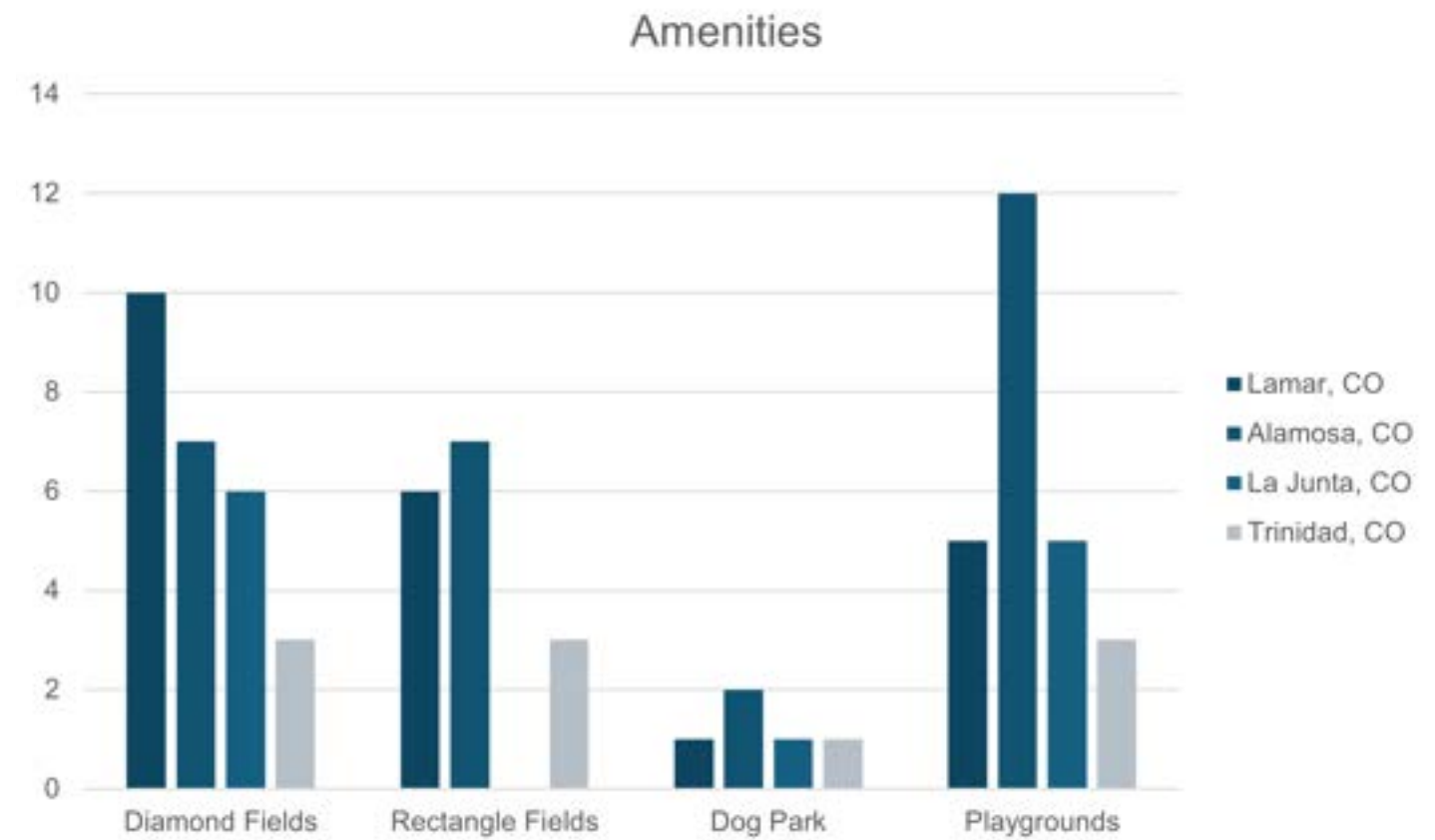
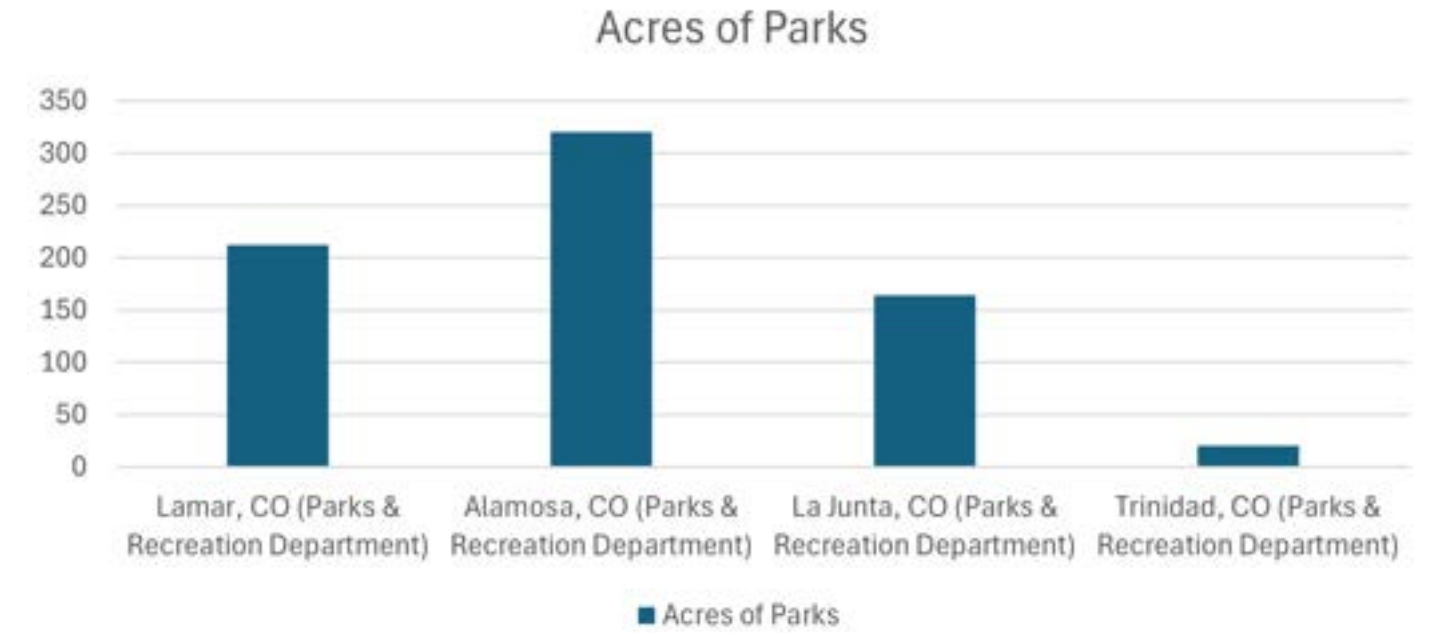


**PEER CITY DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT**

(Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute)

	Lamar, CO (Parks & Recreation Department)	Alamosa, CO (Parks & Recreation Department)	La Junta, CO (Parks & Recreation Department)	Trinidad, CO (Parks & Recreation Department)
<b>POPULATION</b>				
Total Population (2025 Estimate)	7,734	10,075	7,064	8,211
Land Area (sq mi)	4.23	7.60	3.18	7.43
People per Square Mile	1,828	1,326	2,221	1,105
Census 2010 Population	7,914	8,860	7,077	9,111
Population Change 2010-25	-2.3%	13.7%	-0.2%	-9.9%
<b>AGE</b>				
Median Age	36.7	33.6	38.2	44.9
Under 20	28%	27%	27%	21%
20 to 64	54%	56%	54%	53%
65 and over	18%	17%	20%	26%
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>				
White Population	63.3%	55.7%	61.1%	66.0%
Black Population	1.5%	2.4%	1.5%	1.1%
American Indian Population	2.6%	5.2%	2.4%	2.7%
Asian Population	0.4%	1.5%	0.9%	0.8%
Pacific Islander Population	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Other Race Population	18.1%	16.1%	17.6%	12.1%
Two+ Population	14.2%	18.9%	16.3%	17.1%
Hispanic Population	44.3%	54.4%	50.8%	44.8%
<b>INCOME &amp; HOUSING</b>				
Median Household Income	\$55,213	\$51,607	\$53,774	\$59,270
% of Households Making Less Than \$25,000	19.7%	28.0%	22.4%	30.0%
Median Home Sale Value	\$239,000	\$291,000	\$200,000	\$205,000
<b>EDUCATION &amp; EMPLOYMENT</b>				
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (Infograph)	20.9%	31.6%	19.6%	17.4%
White Collar Employment	50.0%	60.4%	55.1%	46.2%
Blue Collar Employment	34.4%	19.0%	33.8%	25.9%
Service Industry Employment	15.7%	20.6%	11.2%	27.9%
Unemployment Rate	3.1%	6.3%	6.1%	7.6%

**PARKS - KEY FEATURES**



## PARKS FUNDING & BUDGETS

The project team was able to obtain the following information relative to parks operations. When reviewing the following information, it is important to recognize that each organization structures and reports its budgets, staffing, and resources differently. Variations may exist in how costs are allocated among departments, how personnel are categorized, and how certain services are funded. While every effort was made to ensure an “apples-to-apples” comparison across communities, these differences in accounting and organizational structure make precise equivalency challenging. Accordingly, the figures presented should be viewed as reasonable indicators rather than absolute values.

### City of Lamar

- Annual Parks Expense Budget \$877,530
- Annual Parks Personnel Budget \$459,175
- Annual Parks Materials & Supplies Budget \$30,000
- Contracted Services Budget \$26,500
- Capital Budget: varies by year, subject to Council decision
- Annual Revenue Budget: N/A – goes into general fund
- Parks FTE: 8

### City of Alamosa

- Annual Parks Budget \$800,000
- Annual Parks Personnel Budget \$580,000
- Annual Parks Materials & Supplies Budget \$40,000
- Contracted Services Budget \$40,000
- Capital Budget: \$200,000 annually
- Annual Revenue Budget: N/A
- Parks FTE: 10

### City of La Junta

- Annual Parks Budget \$532,600
- Annual Parks Personnel Budget \$212,600
- Annual Parks Materials & Supplies Budget \$71,000
- Contracted Services Budget N/A
- Capital Budget: Varies annually
- Annual Revenue Budget: \$10,000
- Parks FTE: 8

### City of Trinidad

- Annual Parks Budget - Not Provided
- Annual Parks Personnel Budget - Not Provided
- Annual Parks Materials & Supplies Budget - Not Provided
- Contracted Services Budget - Not Provided
- Capital Budget - Not Provided
- Annual Revenue Budget - Not Provided
- Parks FTE: 6

## PARKS CONTRACTED SERVICES

Each city that responded provided information that varied regarding the use of contracted services to supplement organizational resources as follows:

- City of Lamar - contracts out maintenance at Pocket Parks for shrubs and flowers, along with porta-potties and limited noxious weed spraying at Willow Creek.
- City of Alamosa – contracts for porta-potties at some park locations, noxious weed spraying for open space and trails. (Weed treatment at parks are done by staff.)
- City of La Junta – contracts for tree spraying, tree trimming and removal.
- City of Trinidad – does not utilize contract services for parks.

## PARKS REFERENCE POINTS

	LAMAR, CO	ALAMOSA, CO	LA JUNTA, CO	TRINIDAD, CO
# Parks	10	14	10	5
Acres of Parks	212	320	164	20
Diamond Fields	9	7	6	3
Rectangle Fields	4	7	0	3
Dog Park	1	2	1	1
Playgrounds	0	12	5	3
Cemeteries	2	1	1	N/A
Cemetery Acreage	30.6	N/A	42	N/A
Trail Systems/Paths	0	24+ miles	3 miles	3 miles

## ADDITIONAL PARKS INFORMATION

- The City of Alamosa funds parks operational expenses through their general fund. There is a .5 cent sales tax for a recreation fund to be used exclusively for recreation and recreation facilities. Online research indicates a manager noted that the dedicated recreation sales tax allows Alamosa to operate a much larger Recreation and Library operation than you would see in similarly sized communities.
- The City of Trinidad desires an internal structure that would combine Parks, Open Space, Facility Maintenance and Recreation Programming.



### CEMETERIES

	LAMAR, CO	ALAMOSA, CO	LA JUNTA, CO	TRINIDAD, CO
Cemeteries	2	1	1	N/A
Cemetery Acreage	30.6	42	42	N/A
Cemetery Headstones	7,500*	8,300	14,000	N/A
Cemetery FTE	7	3	4	0

\*City of Lamar Headstones estimated, actual not available.

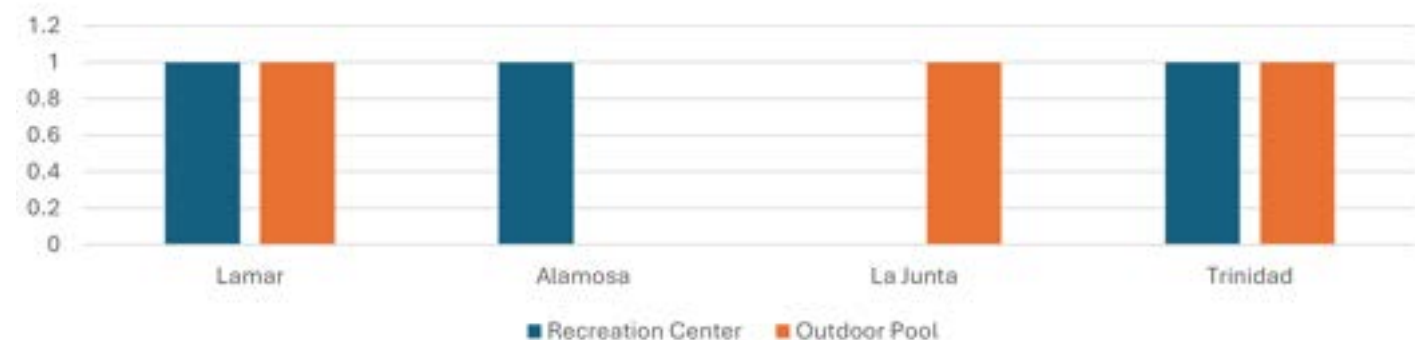
\*\* In addition to the City's 30.6 acres of cemeteries, the cemetery staff in the City of Lamar also maintain an additional 9+ acres of adjacent and nearby areas, such as thoroughfares and additional lands and open spaces.

	LAMAR, CO	ALAMOSA, CO	LA JUNTA, CO	TRINIDAD, CO
Total Parks & Cemeteries Acreage	252	362	216	20
Acreage Maintained per Park/Cemetery FTE	16.81	28.58	17.96	3.33



### RECREATION PROGRAMS & FACILITIES

Recreation Facilities



	LAMAR, CO	ALAMOSA, CO	LA JUNTA, CO	TRINIDAD, CO
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>				
Award-winning	X	X	X	N/A
<b>PROGRAMS</b>				
Sports Leagues	X	X	X	X
Camps	X	X	N/A	X
Senior Programs	X		N/A	X
Fitness	X	X	N/A	X
Youth Programs	X	X	N/A	X
Adult Programs	X	X	N/A	X
Child Watch				
<b>FACILITIES</b>				
Swimming Pools (Outdoor)	X		X	X
Aquatic Centers (Indoor)			**Not City Owned	
Recreation Centers	X	X		X
Skate/Bike Parks	Skate Park Only	X	N/A	X
Indoor Play Facilities				
Winter Sports Facilities		X		
Golf Courses		X	X	X
Outdoor Athletic Fields	X	X	N/A	X
Specialty Facilities (Ice, Fieldhouse, Amphitheater, etc)	Dog Park, Private golf course	Tennis courts, winter seasonal ice rink, library		Dog Park; Office of Outdoor Recreation

\*\* An indoor pool exists in La Junta, but is not entirely public. It is owned and operated by the East Otero School District.

## RECREATION PROGRAMS

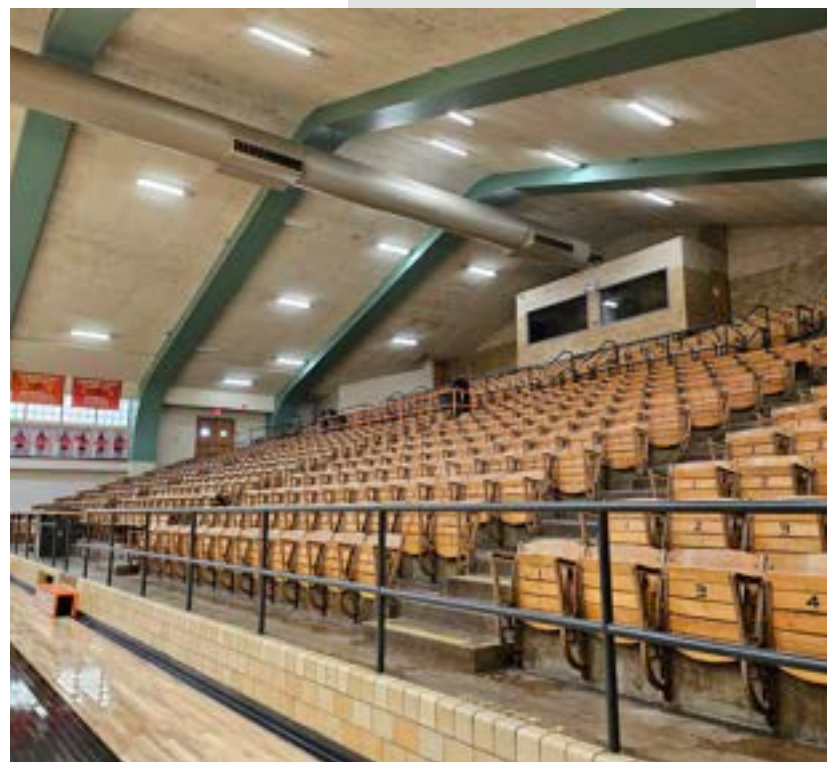
- City of Lamar – offers programs for: Adult Sports, Education (CPR, Lifeguarding, etc.), Fitness/Wellness, Outdoor Recreation, Seniors, Special Events, Special Needs, Teens, Youth/After School Camps, and Youth Sports.
- City of Alamosa – offers programs for: Adult Sports, Cultural Arts, Fitness/Wellness, General Interest, Outdoor Recreation, Special Events, and Youth Sports.
- City of La Junta – offers programs for: Adult Sports, Aquatics, Education (CPR, Lifeguarding, etc.), Fitness/Wellness, General Interest, Outdoor Recreation, Seniors, Special Events, Special Needs, Teens, Youth/After School Camps, and Youth Sports.
- City of Trinidad – offers programs for: Adult Sports, Aquatics, Education (CPR, Lifeguarding, etc.), Fitness/Wellness, and General Interest.

All of the above entities offer a variety of sports programing.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships to assist underserved populations with access to youth or after school programs are offered by three of the four entities, although not necessarily publicized. The fourth entity does not offer scholarships.

The City of Lamar utilizes a formalized scholarship process, including a written application and verification of need through Human Services and the About F.A.C.E. Collaborative Management Program. This program is a CMP-type program (Collaborative Management Program) under Colorado’s HB 04-1451 framework which reimburses the department for awarded scholarships. Such a structured and accountable approach - linking verification, administration, and financial reimbursement - is uncommon among parks and recreation agencies in Colorado (or nationally) and is recognized as a best-practice model in public recreation management.



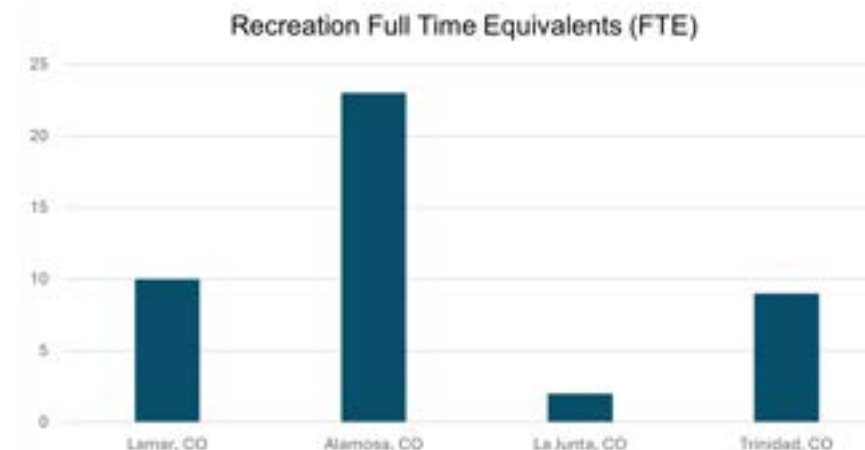
## RECREATION FUNDING & BUDGETS

- Annual recreation expense budgets ranged from \$454,000 (La Junta) - \$3,500,000 (Alamosa). The City of Lamar’s recreation expense budget \$902,184, which includes the outdoor seasonal swimming pool, recreation and the Community Center.
- Personnel budgets for recreation ranged from \$203,000 (La Junta) - \$1,400,000 (Alamosa). The City of Lamar’s recreation personnel budget is \$404,065.
- Annual recreation revenue budgets ranged from \$42,000 (La Junta) - \$3,700,000 (Alamosa). The City of Lamar’s recreation revenue budget is \$344,600. It should be noted that the City of Alamosa’s \$3.7m revenue includes golf revenue and grants.

## RECREATION PERSONNEL & FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTE)

As previously indicated, personnel and staffing rates vary widely across recreation departments, driven by operating philosophy, the amenity mix (e.g., indoor vs. outdoor), and the service-delivery model (in-house staffing, contractors, or volunteers).

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is a way to measure staffing by combining full-time and part-time employees into one simple number. For example, two part-time employees who each work half the hours of a full-time schedule would equal 1.0 FTE.



## ADDITIONAL RECREATION INFORMATION

There is a .5 cent sales tax in the City of Alamosa for a recreation fund to be used exclusively for recreation and recreation facilities. Online research indicates a manager noted that the dedicated recreation sales tax allows Alamosa to operate a much larger Recreation and Library operation than you would see in similarly sized communities.

## OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Two of the aforementioned entities, the cities of Alamosa and La Junta have written operational procedures or manuals as follows:

- **The City of Lamar** has written manuals or written procedures for Water Chemistry testing and logs, Inservice trainings, cash handling procedures, safety inspections, opening and closing duties, and play ground checklists.
- **Alamosa Stated** they had manuals or written procedures for “all or the above” in reference to the preceding information questions, with the exception of aquatics and field maintenance.
- **La Junta** stated they have manuals or written procedures for: Water Chemistry logs, Cash Handling Procedures, Safety Inspections, Closing Duties, Inservice Trainings, and Play Ground Checklist.

## RECREATION REFERENCE POINTS

Cost Recovery – Cost recovery rates vary widely across recreation departments, driven by operating philosophy, the amenity mix (e.g., indoor vs. outdoor), and the service-delivery model (in-house staffing, contracted services, or rentals).

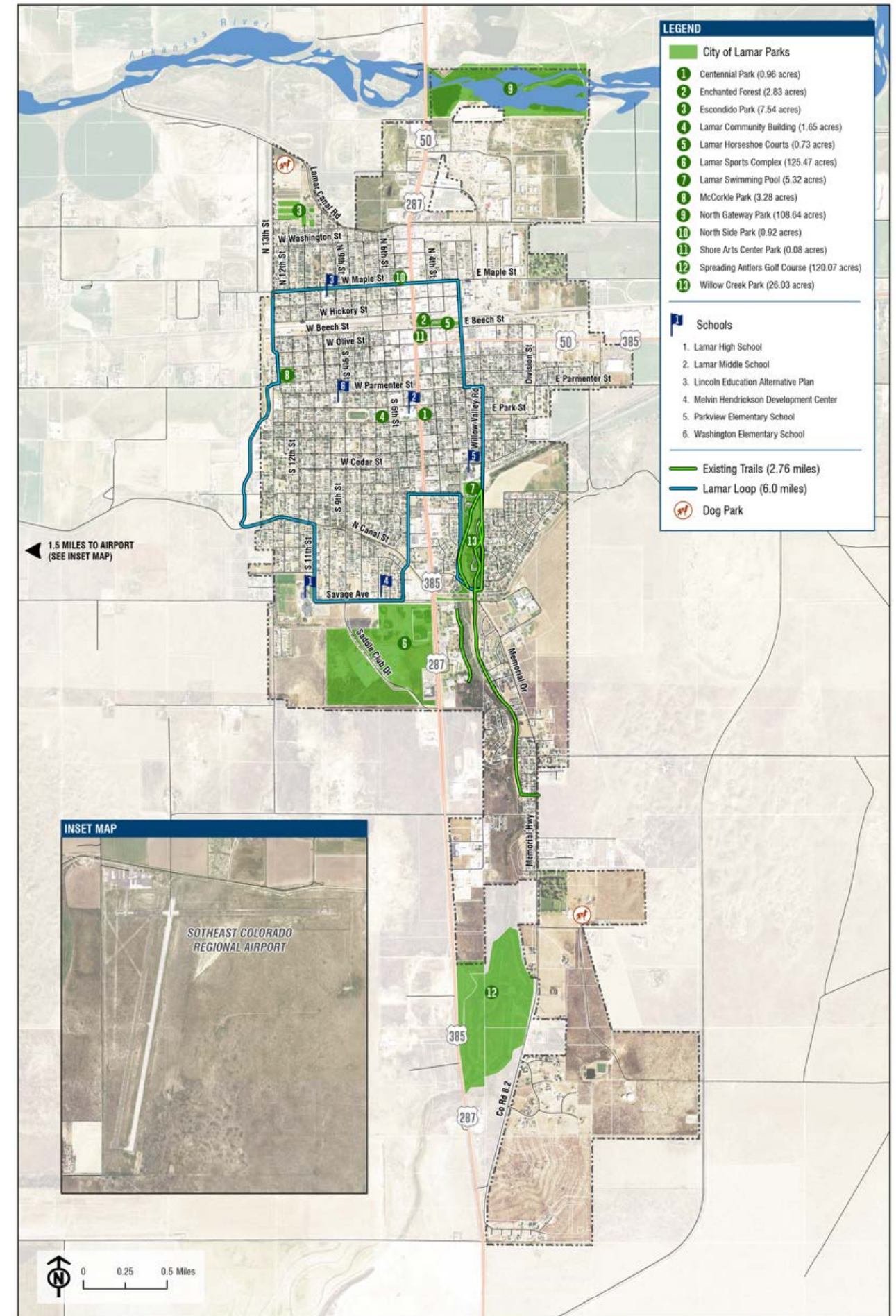
	LAMAR, CO	ALAMOSA, CO	LA JUNTA, CO	TRINIDAD, CO
<b>Recreation Expense</b>	\$ 902,184	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 454,400	N/A
<b>Recreation Revenue</b>	\$ 344,600	\$ 3,700,000	\$ 42,000	N/A
<b>Cost Recovery</b>	38%	106%	9%	N/A

- The City of Alamosa operates at a 106% cost recovery, supported by the local .5 sales tax which provides funding for recreation and recreation facilities.
- The City of La Junta operates at a 9% cost recovery, likely due to the lack of operating an indoor recreation facility or having a recreation funding mechanism.

# INVENTORY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Inventory and Recommendations chapter provides a comprehensive assessment of Lamar’s existing parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces, identifying how well the current system meets the needs of the community today and into the future. Building on demographic analysis, public engagement findings, and spatial mapping, this section highlights where amenities are performing well and where gaps, inequities, or opportunities for enhancement exist. Together, these insights inform a set of targeted recommendations designed to improve access, elevate the quality and functionality of parks, and ensure facilities are aligned with the needs of residents of all ages and abilities. This framework serves as the foundation for strategic investments that will guide Lamar toward a more connected, resilient, and inclusive parks and recreation system.

This map shows the City of Lamar and calls out each park, community asset, and trail system as detailed in this document.



## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented in this chapter are informed by site visits, stakeholder interviews, peer review, operational data provided by the City, and professional experience with comparable park and recreation systems. A recurring challenge throughout the planning process was the limited availability of consistent historical data and the absence of comprehensive systems to track participation, financial performance, and facility utilization. As a result, several recommendations focus not only on physical improvements and program expansion, but also on strengthening the City's ability to measure outcomes, evaluate performance, and make informed decisions over time. A recommended reporting and performance metrics framework to support this effort is provided in Appendix C.

These recommendations are intentionally pragmatic. They recognize current staffing capacity, fiscal realities, and the City's operational structure while providing a framework for long-term system improvement. The goal is to support a sustainable parks and recreation system that balances community expectations with the City's ability to deliver services effectively.

### PARKS GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Lamar's park system provides a range of neighborhood and community-level parks and amenities that contribute significantly to local quality of life. While many parks are well used and well regarded, system-wide needs related to maintenance sustainability, comfort amenities, and clarity of responsibility were consistently identified.

A foundational recommendation is the development of a formal preventative maintenance and asset management program. Currently, maintenance is largely reactive and dependent on internal institutional knowledge. Establishing a documented system that tracks lifecycle replacement for irrigation systems, playgrounds, restrooms, shade structures, paved surfaces, and athletic fields will improve long-term budgeting, reduce unexpected capital costs, and support more consistent service delivery.

#### SYSTEM WIDE NEEDS:

- Across the parks, shade and restrooms emerged as high-priority comfort amenities. Investment in durable shade structures and modernized restroom facilities should be prioritized at high-use locations such as Willow Creek Park, North Gateway Park, and athletic/sports field sites. These improvements would support longer visits, increased participation, and improved accessibility.
- ADA compliance should be reviewed throughout the park system, particularly at older parks, athletic field sites, and parking areas. Incremental improvements can significantly enhance equitable access while reducing risk and liability.
- Establishing formalized documentation for procedures, maintenance, and existing systems should be prioritized.
- Irrigation audits would support reinvestment into current facility maintenance efforts.
- Ensure record keeping of inspections and repairs to show equipment maintenance, age, and cost to maintain.



### RECREATION GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Lamar offers a solid base of youth sports and facility-based programming; however, analysis revealed a program imbalance that limits participation among seniors, adults, families, and non-sport users. Expanding offerings for older adults, wellness-focused participants, creative and arts-based users, and intergenerational households represents a meaningful opportunity to improve equity and broaden community impact.

Operational systems and data tracking represent a critical opportunity for improvement. The transition from the Active system to Tyler software should be approached as a strategic initiative rather than solely a technology upgrade. Recreation staff should be actively involved in system configuration to ensure that registration, scheduling, financial reporting, and participation tracking align with operational needs and will be completed on a regular basis.

A standardized reporting framework should be established to track participation by program and age group, cost recovery and subsidy levels, customer satisfaction, and facility utilization. The absence of consistent historical data limited analysis during this planning effort and underscores the importance of improved tracking moving forward. Specific recommended reports and performance metrics to support improved decision-making and long-term planning are outlined in Appendix A.

#### SYSTEM WIDE NEEDS:

- Establish broader, more inclusive program mix to balance the current emphasis on youth sports and expand opportunities for older adults, adults without children, and residents seeking non-sport recreation.
- Implement new recreation software system to ensure that registration, scheduling, and financial tracking match operational needs










PARK FACILITIES

# WILLOW CREEK PARK

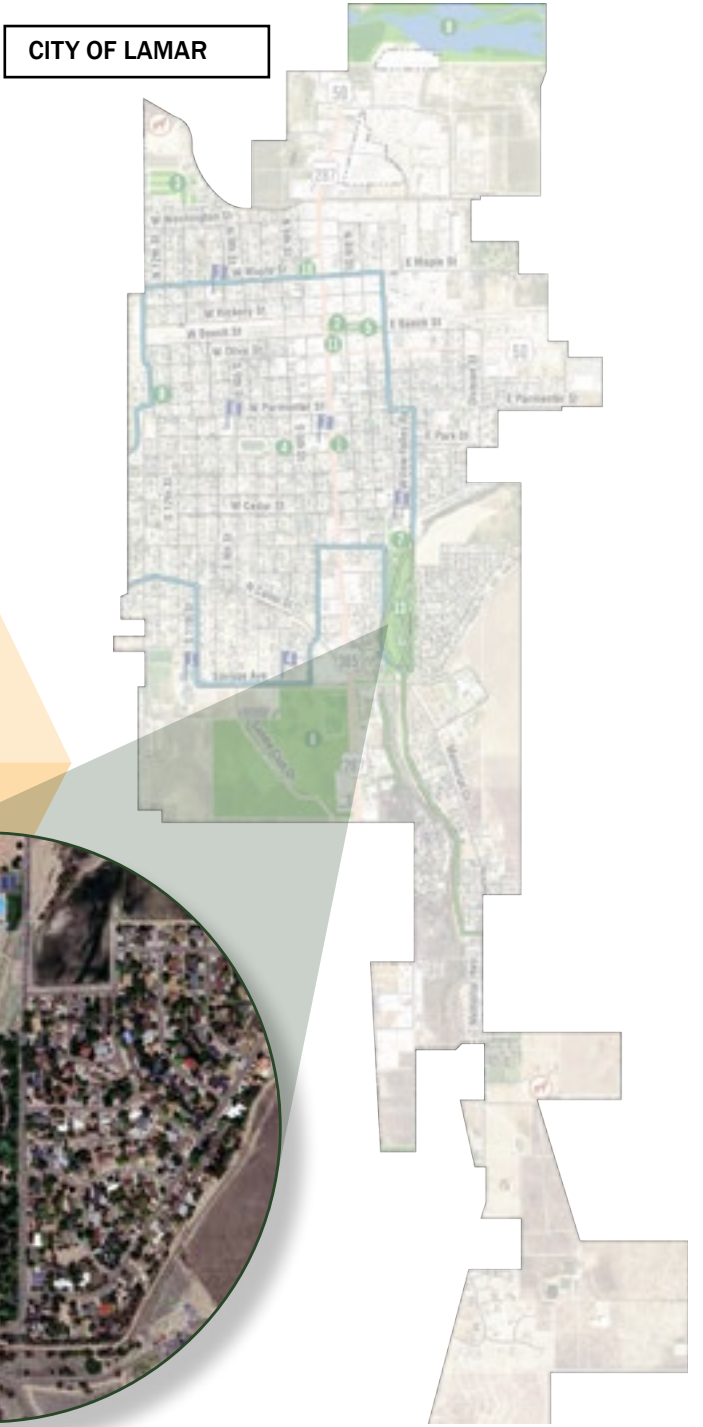
Willow Creek Park is a historically significant public space that showcases both natural beauty and cultural heritage. Developed between 1933 and 1938 as the first Civil Works Administration (CWA) project in Colorado, the park was part of a broader New Deal initiative that provided employment and community support during the Great Depression. The park features native stone structures such as Pike's Tower, a shelter house, a colonette, a caretaker's cottage, and a Boy Scout Kiva.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

-  PLAYGROUND
-  SKATE PARK
-  WALKING PATHS
-  FORMALIZED PARKING
-  DISC GOLF COURSE
-  HISTORICAL ELEMENTS
-  SHADE STRUCTURE

## QUICK FACTS

-  **SIZE:**  
± 25.5 ACRES
-  **LOCATION:**  
3rd & PARKWAY
-  **ZONING:**  
R1 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT



## OBSERVATIONS

Today, Willow Creek Park offers modern amenities including multiple playgrounds, skatepark, disc golf course, proximity to the outdoor pool, and open spaces for picnics and sports. It hosts a variety of community events throughout the year, including the annual Lamar Days Rod Run, a long-standing tradition featuring a car show, poker run, parade, vendor booths, and family-friendly entertainment. The park also serves as a venue for seasonal socials, such as the Community Social, which includes swimming, outdoor movies, and other free activities that foster community connection and engagement.





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

**POSITIVE FEEDBACK:**

- Loved for its shade, green grass, and spaciousness.
- Offers a variety of activities: walking trails, frisbee golf, skate park, playgrounds, historic masonry features (such as Pike's Tower).
- Considered well-maintained and accessible.
- Frequently used for community events
- Appreciated for it's value as a regional draw

**CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:**

- Unhoused population presence and tents make some feel unsafe.
- Bathrooms are often dirty or closed.
- Stone walls and CWA structures are deteriorating and need restoration.
- Lack of lighting and parking.
- Desire for a pump track for bikes.
- Requests for more patrols and enforcement of leash laws.
- Need for better signage and designated parking areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Perform ADA audit on all playground equipment and parking
- Consider replacing/updating aging playground equipment
- Prepare a maintenance plan for repairing historical elements (walls, buildings, etc)
- Consider developing a foundation to support historic preservation efforts at this park. More information regarding Park Foundations can be found in Appendix B.
- Implement circulation modifications on the south side of the park as presented in the 2015 Plan.



## LAMAR COMMUNITY POOL AMENITY OF WILLOW CREEK PARK

The Lamar Swimming Pool serves as a vital seasonal recreation amenity for residents of all ages, providing opportunities for open swim, lessons, aquatic fitness, and community gatherings. As one of the City's most popular summer facilities, the pool supports youth development, public health, and family recreation while contributing to overall quality of life in Lamar.

The outdoor swimming pool remains a valued seasonal amenity; however, operational data indicate increasing pressure on long-term sustainability. Total operating costs have risen significantly in recent years, driven primarily by staffing expenses, while attendance and revenue have remained relatively flat.

Several operational improvements are recommended to stabilize pool operations. These include installation of an automated chemical feeder system to improve water quality consistency and reduce staff handling risks, improved ventilation in chemical storage areas, exploration of a pool cover or blanket to reduce evaporation and heat loss, and planning for liner replacement and concrete repairs within the capital improvement program.

Concessions should be repositioned as a financially sustainable operation that contributes positively to overall pool operations. While gross revenues exceed cost of goods sold, labor costs are not currently tracked within concession operations, resulting in an overall loss when staffing is considered. Implementing inventory control, revising menu pricing annually, clarifying staff access policies, and adopting standard food, labor, and overhead targets will improve fiscal performance. More detail on this is provided in Appendix D.

Pool rental and fee policies should be reviewed annually to ensure consistency with actual operating costs and established community benefit goals. Should the City of Lamar choose to pursue development of an indoor pool facility, it would need to plan for substantial upfront and long-term financial obligations. Comparable indoor aquatic facilities typically require \$15–\$20 million or more in capital investment, exclusive of land, site needs, and financing, followed by ongoing annual operating subsidies often ranging from \$300,000–\$650,000. These subsidies are driven by high staffing levels, energy consumption, water treatment, and major equipment replacement costs. The development, construction, and operation of an indoor pool would require the City of Lamar to balance this investment against other current and future municipal needs and priorities.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement automated chemical feeder system and improve chemical storage ventilation
- Explore use of a pool cover to reduce evaporation, heat loss, and operating costs
- Plan for liner replacement and concrete repairs within the capital improvement program
- Improve concession sustainability through inventory controls, annual pricing review, and labor cost tracking
- Establish clear financial performance targets for concession operations
- Review pool fees and rental policies annually to align with operating costs and community goals
- Carefully evaluate the significant capital and ongoing subsidy requirements before pursuing an indoor pool facility

### FUTURE INDOOR POOL: IS IT FEASIBLE?

Although community feedback clearly expressed interest in an indoor pool, this facility is not recommended at this time. The City's existing outdoor pool continues to serve as a valued seasonal amenity, but current operational data show that it is already under significant financial pressure. Operating costs have increased in recent years, while attendance and revenue have remained relatively flat. This trend signals that the City must first stabilize the sustainability of its current aquatic operations before considering large new capital projects.

While these improvements are achievable and cost-effective, an indoor aquatic facility represents a scale of investment far beyond current resources. Comparable indoor pools typically require:

- \$15–\$20 million or more in capital costs, excluding land or site work
- Annual operating subsidies of \$300,000–\$650,000, often driven by:
  - » High staffing levels
  - » Continuous HVAC and air-handling needs
  - » Significant energy consumption
  - » Complex water treatment systems
  - » Regular major equipment replacement

For a community the size of Lamar, taking on these ongoing financial obligations would require a long-term, dedicated funding source and will compete with other municipal priorities. Given the rising operational costs of the existing outdoor pool, the identified maintenance and modernization needs, and the substantial long-term cost burden associated with indoor aquatic facilities, an indoor pool is not feasible or financially sustainable within this planning horizon.

Focusing investments on improving and stabilizing the existing outdoor pool is the most responsible and achievable path forward. Should community capacity, partnerships, or funding opportunities grow in the future, an indoor pool may be reconsidered as a long-range possibility, but it is not recommended today.



PARK FACILITIES

# NORTH GATEWAY PARK

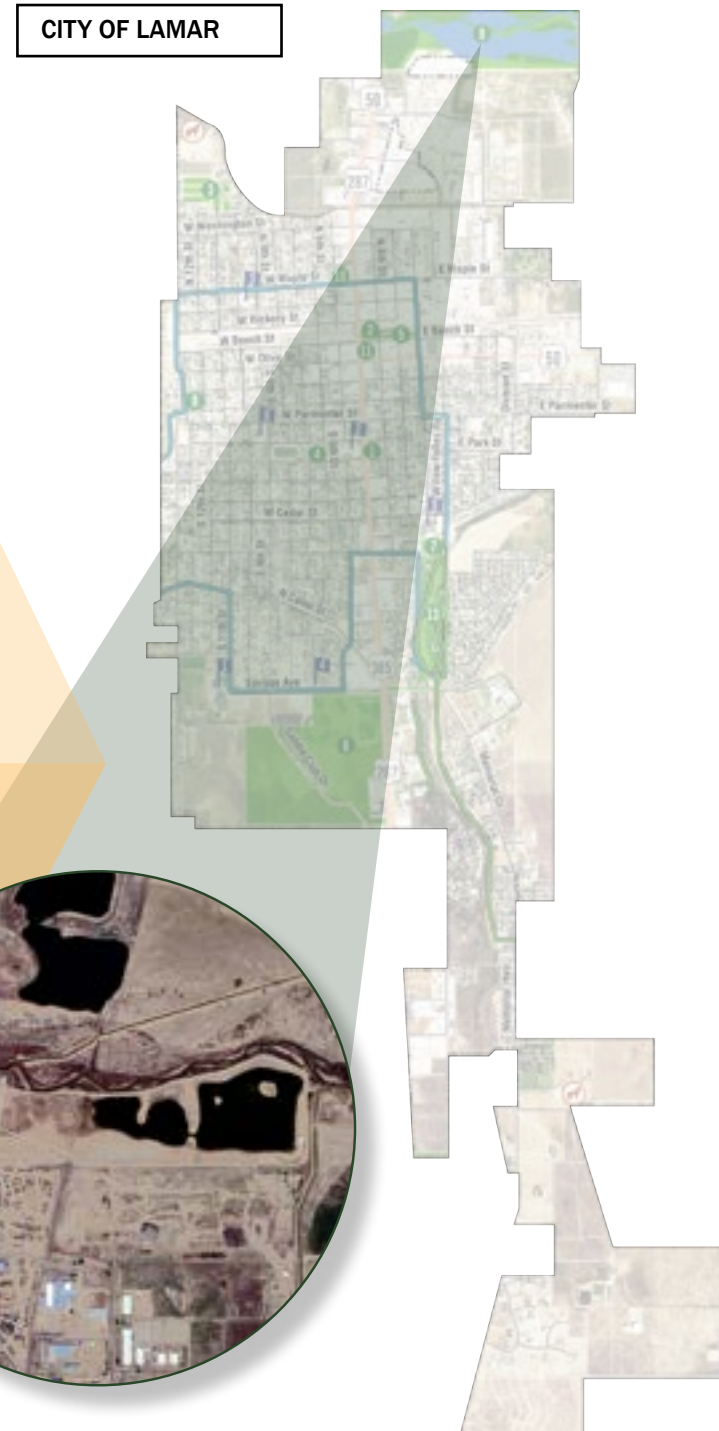
North Gateway Park is a multi-use public space that has evolved from a former gravel mining site into a community-oriented recreational area. Previously known as the Valco Ponds, the site was repurposed through collaborative efforts between the City of Lamar and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. These efforts included infrastructure improvements such as the installation of a floating dock, shade shelters, restrooms, and picnic facilities, many of which were funded through the “Fishing is Fun” grant program.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

- WATER ACCESS
- SHADE SHELTERS
- WALKING PATHS
- GRAVEL PARKING
- RESTROOMS
- DOG PARK
- VOLLEYBALL
- ARCHERY

## QUICK FACTS

- SIZE:**  
± 70.5 ACRES
- LOCATION:**  
1420 VALCO ROAD
- ZONING:**  
AGRICULTURE DISTRICT



## OBSERVATIONS

The park features several ponds that support a range of non-motorized water activities, including fishing, kayaking, and paddleboarding. Local businesses, such as Aqua-holics, provide seasonal equipment rentals to facilitate public access to the water. In addition to aquatic recreation, the park offers open green spaces and informal trails that are used for walking, birdwatching, and family outings.

While North Gateway Park does not serve as a primary venue for large-scale events, it plays an important role in the city’s broader network of outdoor spaces. It provides residents and visitors with opportunities for low-impact recreation and nature-based leisure, contributing to the overall quality of life in the Lamar area.





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

**POSITIVE FEEDBACK:**

- Appreciated for fishing, swimming, and wildlife.
- Clean and well-maintained.
- Seen as a great outdoor connection for the community

**CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:**

- Needs more shade and hard surface trails.
- Grass condition is poor and maintenance is lacking.
- Desire for a play area near the swim beach.
- Mentioned in need of general improvement and upkeep.
- Dusty and hot conditions during summer

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase plant material throughout by spreading native seed to aid in keeping down dust
- Some softer finishes, such as sod, adjacent to picnic areas
- Consider tree planting for increased shade
  - » When considering development, prioritize maintaining the natural feel of the area
- Improve informal access to the water at key locations (using boulders and natural materials – not just docks).
- Expand dog park (not sod, just larger natural or native area with trees, benches, shade, trails and open areas)
- Work with CPW to improve fish habitat and water quality
- If archery is successful, consider walking archery course
- Further explore potable water on site and consider adding a drinking water source
- Establish an emergency action plan for this area to help assist with open water emergencies.



## NORTH GATEWAY PARK - POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

North Gateway Park is already heavily used and loved by the community, but has some areas for simple and straightforward improvement. The three areas, detailed below, each have different program uses, and therefore different needs. As a whole, this area can be difficult for visitors to find - wayfinding signage and consistent branding is recommended to draw more attention to this resource. Additionally, sidewalks or painted bike lanes along Crystal Rd and Valco Rd would ease non-vehicular access into the park.

The listed potential improvements should be considered as starting points. A full site study of North Gateway Park is needed to ensure the space is used to its fullest potential when considering large-scale changes.



FULL SITE DIAGRAM



### Potential improvements:



Introduce small, manageable turf areas near park shelters to soften the environment in high traffic areas

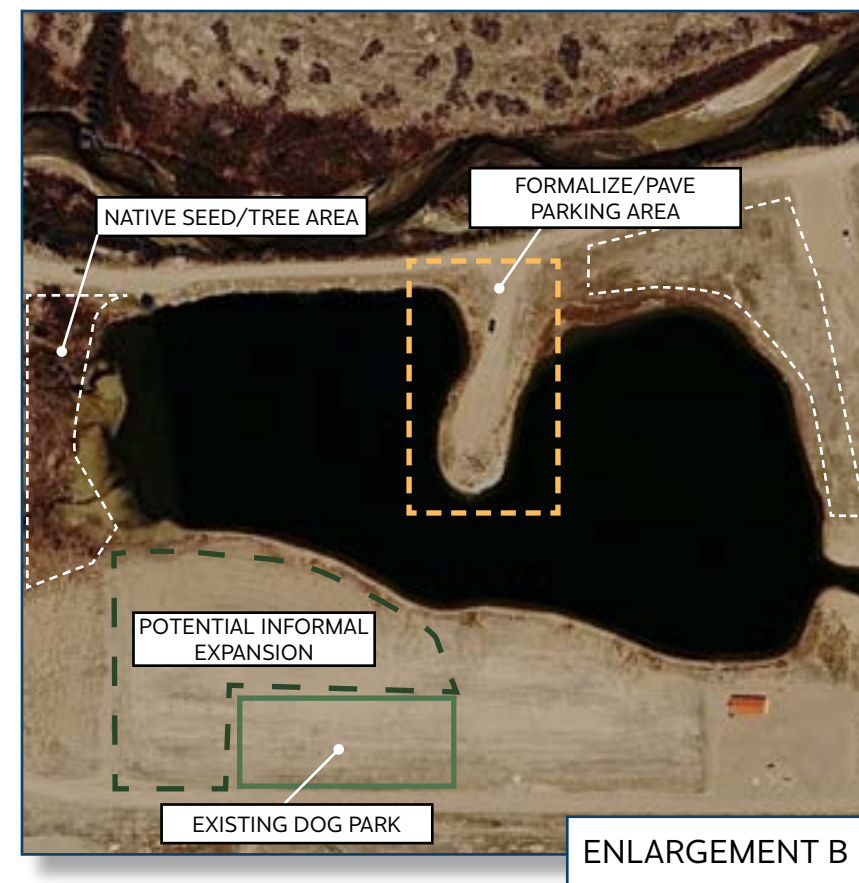


Spread regionally appropriate native species to stabilize soils, reduce dust, and support long-term ecological function.



Plant native trees in planted areas to provide shade and help mitigate dusty conditions

ENLARGEMENT A

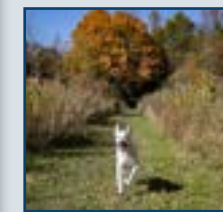


ENLARGEMENT B

### Potential improvements:



Formalize/pave parking area to improve access



Expand fenced dog park into native areas, allowing for a different dog park experience beyond formal, maintained area



Spread regionally appropriate native species to stabilize soils, reduce dust, and support long-term ecological function.



ENLARGEMENT C

### Potential improvements:



Add playground near swim beach to create more age-diverse recreation in the area



Consider adding a swim platform near the swim beach for enhanced water recreation



Spread regionally appropriate native species to stabilize soils, reduce dust, and support long-term ecological function.

PARK FACILITIES

# NORTHSIDE PARK

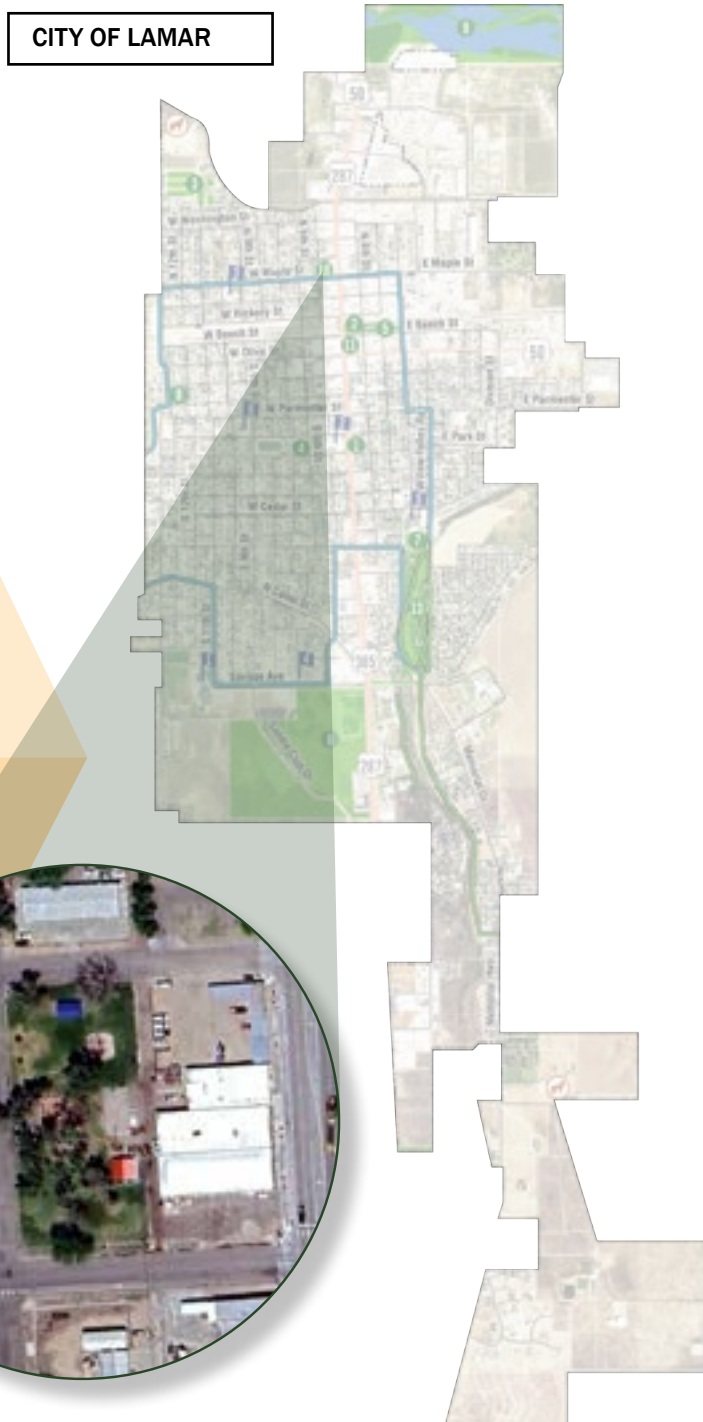
Northside Park is a neighborhood-oriented recreational space with a mix of amenities that support both active and passive use. Located at North 5th Street and West Maple Street, the park spans approximately 1.1 acres and primarily functions as a neighborhood park. It provides play equipment and picnic shelters in a more intimate environment than some of Lamar's larger venues.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

-  PLAYGROUND
-  SHADE SHELTERS
-  RESTROOMS
-  BASKETBALL COURT

## QUICK FACTS

-  **SIZE:**  
± 2 ACRES
-  **LOCATION:**  
5th & MAPLE
-  **ZONING:**  
C2 COMMERCIAL DISTRICT



## OBSERVATIONS

While not a major event space, Northside Park plays a meaningful role in the everyday lives of Lamar residents. It offers accessible green space for informal recreation, social interaction, and seasonal enjoyment, contributing to the city's overall network of public parks and its commitment to community wellness.





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

### POSITIVE FEEDBACK:

- Used frequently and appreciated for its location and shelter.

### CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:

- Needs a second shelter and new picnic tables.
- Reports of drug paraphernalia and aggressive dogs.
- Bathrooms are outdated and not well-maintained.
- Requests for more patrols and safety measures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Perform an ADA audit on playground equipment to ensure accessibility for users of all abilities
- Trim/remove trees to reduce risk of limbs falling
- Plant new trees to replace any removals, ensuring the space remains shady and comfortable in summer conditions
- Perform an irrigation audit to preserve plant health
- Consider replacing aging shade structures
- Consider replacing woodchips in park with rubber or other material



PARK FACILITIES

# ESCONDIDO PARK

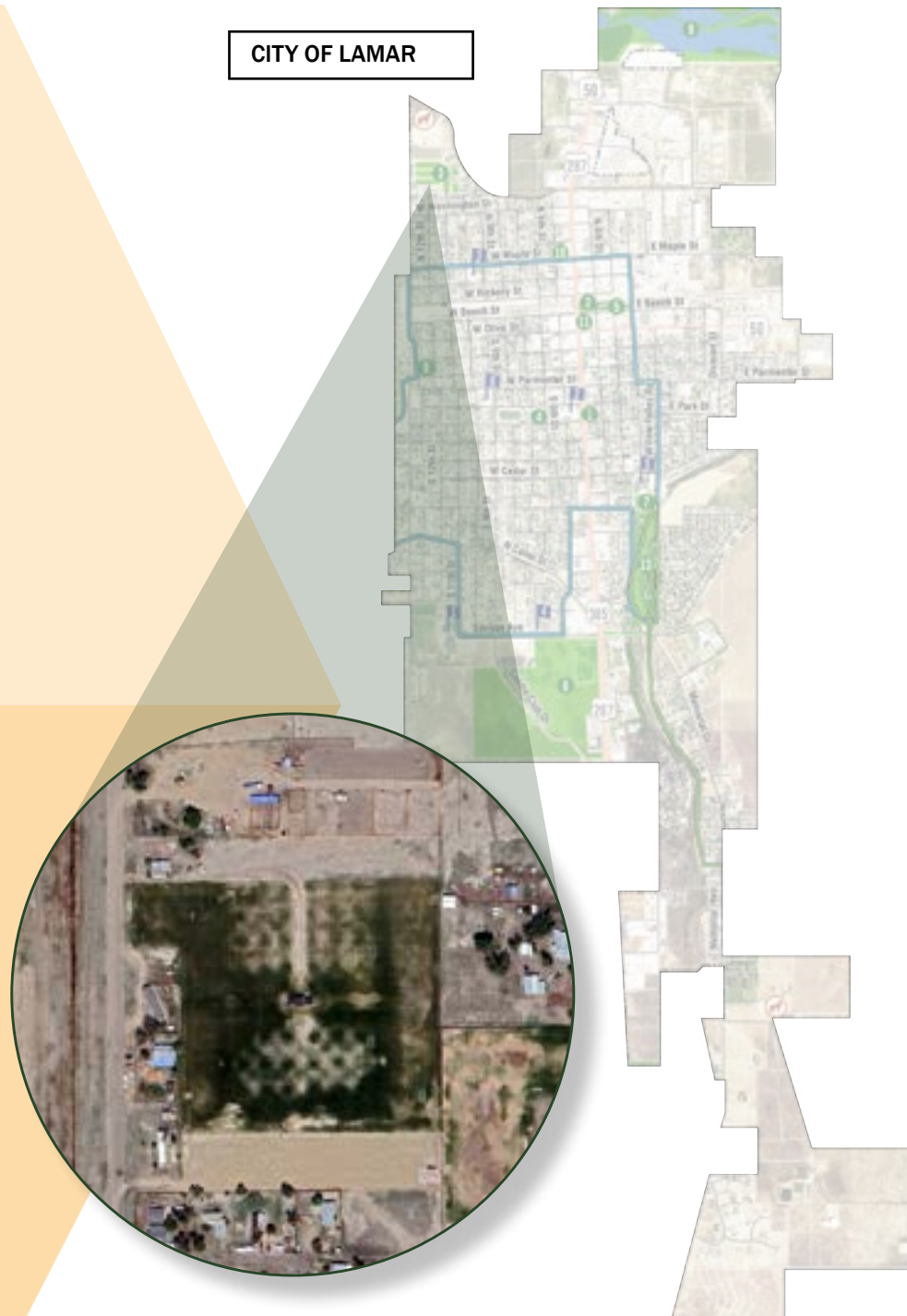
Escondido Park is a multi-use public recreation area, developed as part of a phased initiative to expand and improve the city's outdoor infrastructure. The park includes multiple tournament-sized soccer fields, one of which is used by Lamar Community College for collegiate athletics, while others are available for public use and community programming. These fields are designed to accommodate both competitive play and informal recreation.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

-  PLAYGROUND
-  SOCCER FIELDS
-  RESTROOMS

## QUICK FACTS

-  **SIZE:**  
± 15 ACRES
-  **LOCATION:**  
11TH & LOGAN
-  **ZONING:**  
R2 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

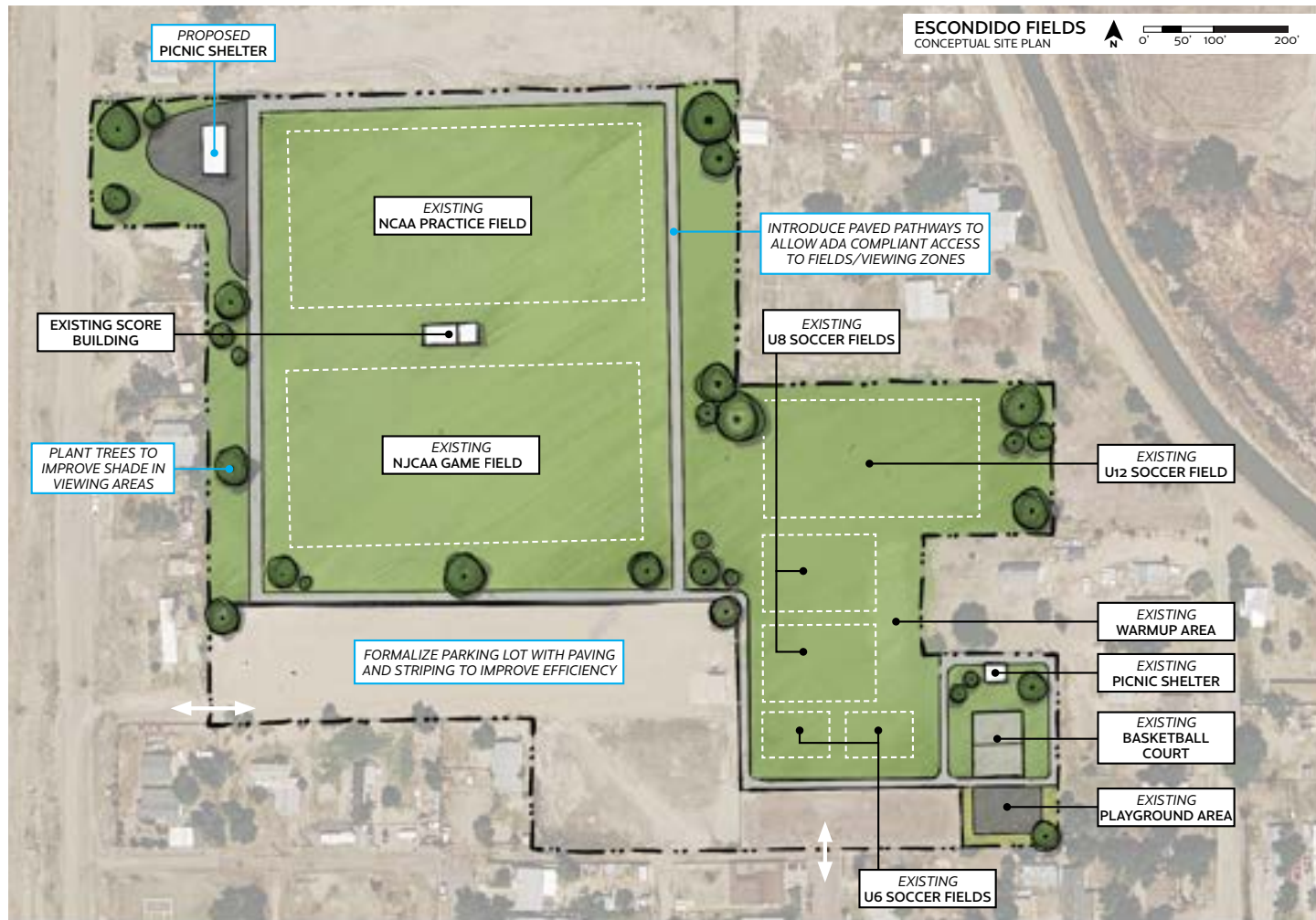
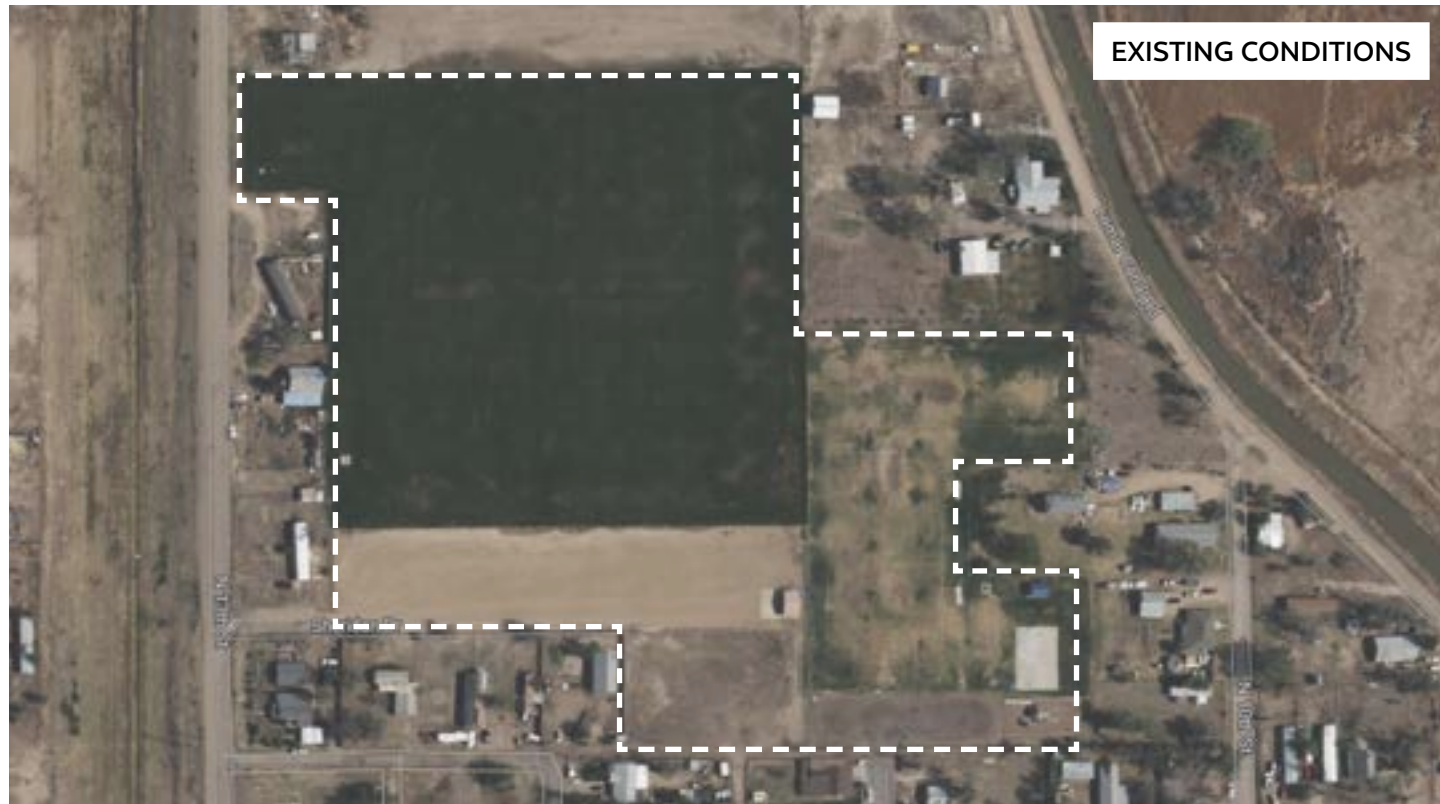


## OBSERVATIONS

In addition to its athletic facilities, Escondido Park features a range of amenities that support broader community use. These include paved pedestrian pathways, seating areas, shelters, and grills. The park's layout and amenities reflect a dual purpose: to serve as a venue for regional sports events and to function as a neighborhood park accessible to residents year-round.

City planning discussions have focused on ongoing maintenance and field performance, with efforts focused on improving soil conditions, irrigation systems, and turf quality. These investments highlight the city's commitment to sustaining Escondido Park as a valuable community asset. While primarily known for its soccer facilities, Escondido Park contributes to Lamar's overall network of public spaces by offering opportunities for recreation, social interaction, and organized sports, supporting both local engagement and regional visibility. While there is still room for this field to be used to its full potential, significant improvements were made to improve drainage and turf quality in 2025.





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

### POSITIVE FEEDBACK:

- Heavily used for soccer and recreation programs.

### CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:

- Grass is in poor condition, full of stickers.
- Lack of shade and seating.
- Field is uneven and needs maintenance.
- Accessibility issues for people with disabilities.
- Perceived as neglected and in need of attention.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider more shade opportunities with increased planting or structures
- Biggest need is parking: formalize/pave and increase volume
- Potential walking path around the fields with access/additional parking on north side
- Improve multimodal access points
- Playground improvements/ADA audits
- Potential future addition of volleyball/pickleball courts in current warmup space



**PARK FACILITIES**

# BI-CENTENNIAL PARK

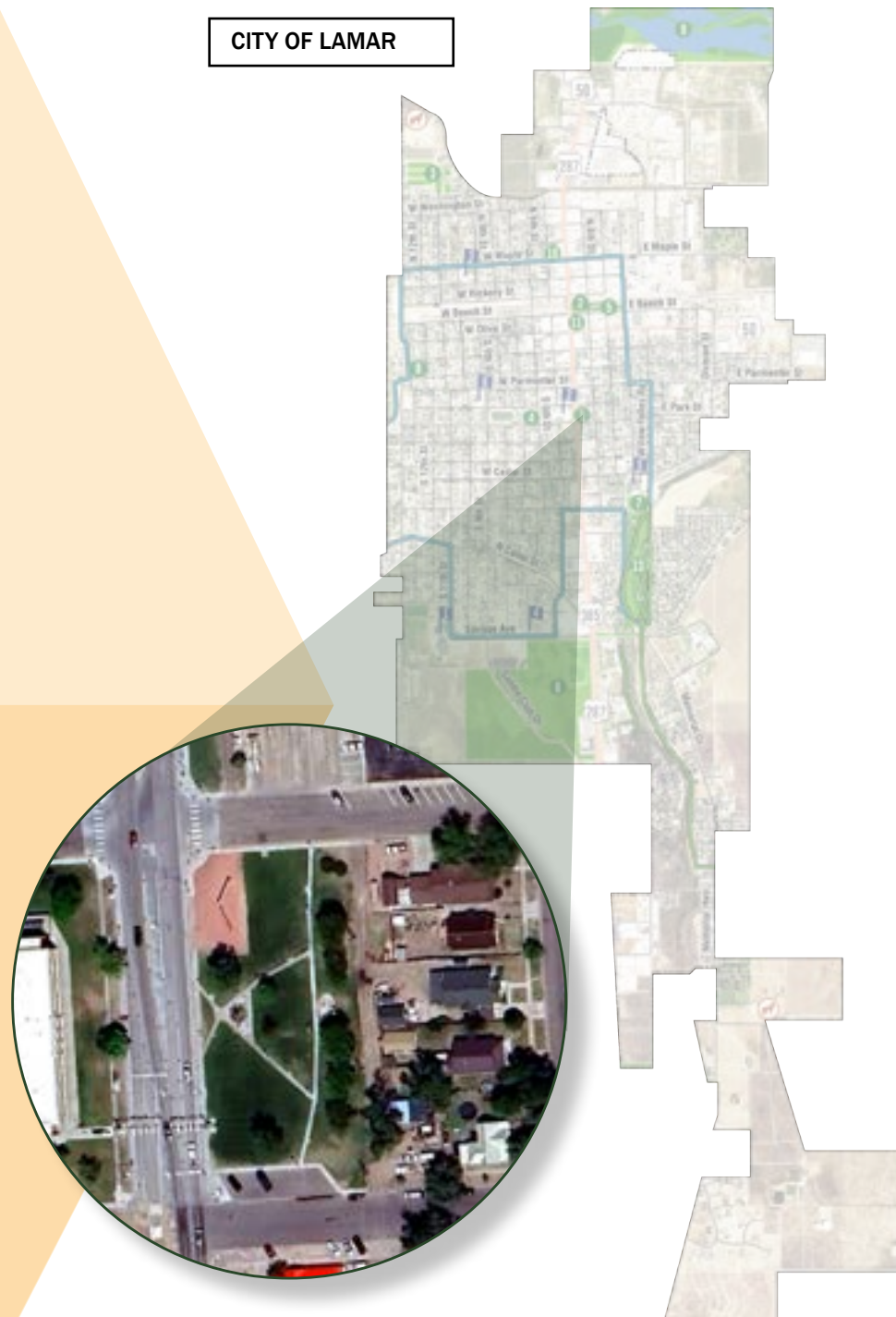
Bi-Centennial Park in Lamar, Colorado, serves as a public green space that combines recreation, accessibility, and cultural features. Located at 601 South Main Street, the park features walking paths, restrooms, and parking, making it a convenient spot for walking, jogging, and casual outdoor activities. Its landscaped areas and water features provide a natural setting within the city, and the installation of the “Dancing Dawn” sculpture by local artist Jeremy Cooper reflects the city’s effort to integrate public art into community spaces.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

-  WALKING PATHS
-  PUBLIC ART
-  BENCHES/SITE FURNISHINGS

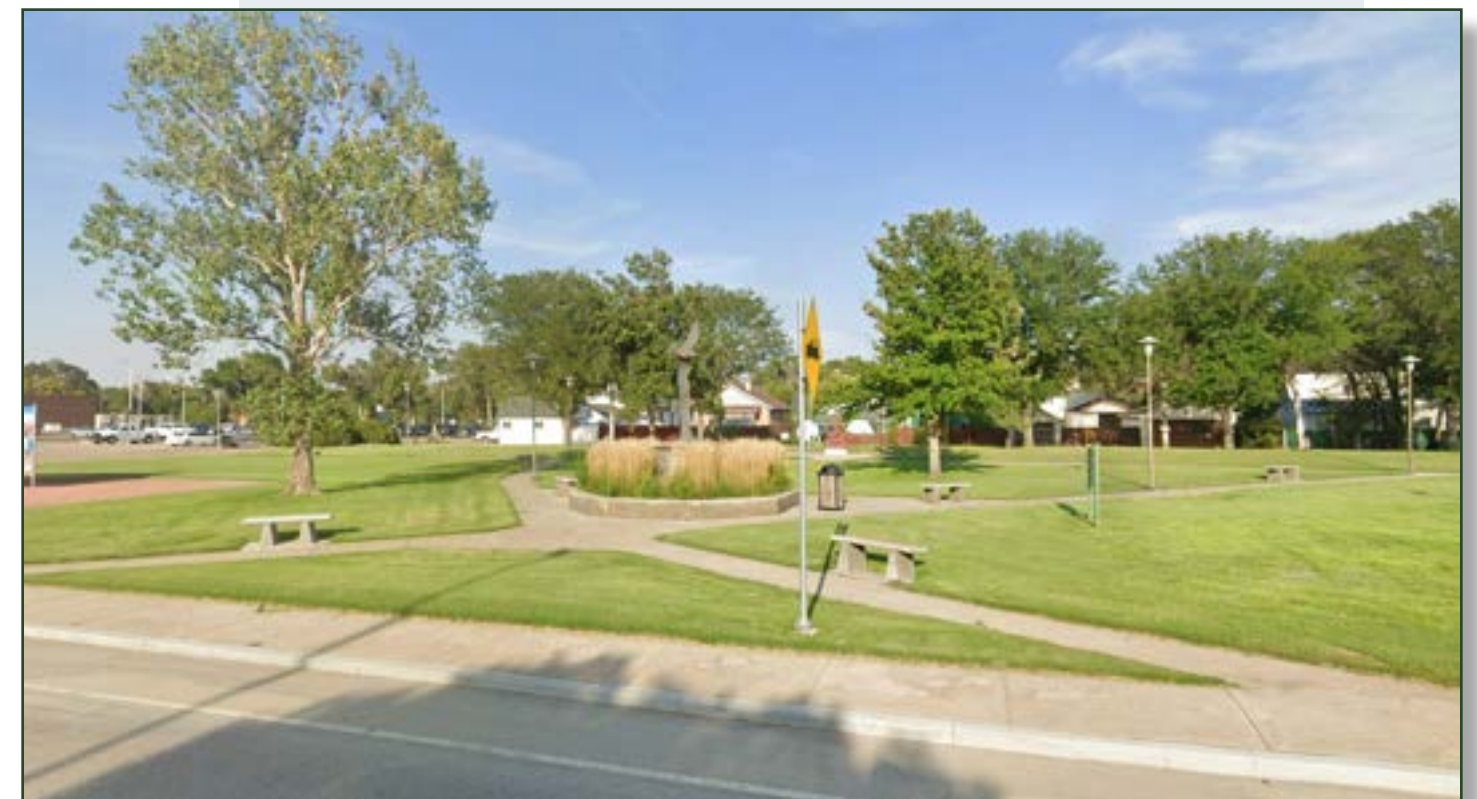
## QUICK FACTS

-  **SIZE:**  
± 1 ACRE
-  **LOCATION:**  
601 SOUTH MAIN
-  **ZONING:**  
C2 COMERCIAL DISTRICT



## OBSERVATIONS

While the specific history of the park’s establishment is not well documented, its commemorative name and place within Lamar’s larger network of parks and recreation areas connect it to the city’s ongoing investment in public amenities. Today, Bi-Centennial Park functions as a multipurpose site for everyday recreation, light community use, and appreciation of both natural and cultural elements.





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

### POSITIVE FEEDBACK:

- Attractive, green park
- Enjoyed for it's use in community events

### CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:

- Regarded as underutilized, as it has a prime location on Main Street

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider if current programming is highest and best use of the space.
  - » Location on Main Street makes for high visibility to travellers coming through town
  - » Consider use as an event space or potential relocation of the Farmer's Market



PARK FACILITIES



# SHORE ARTS CENTER POCKET PARK

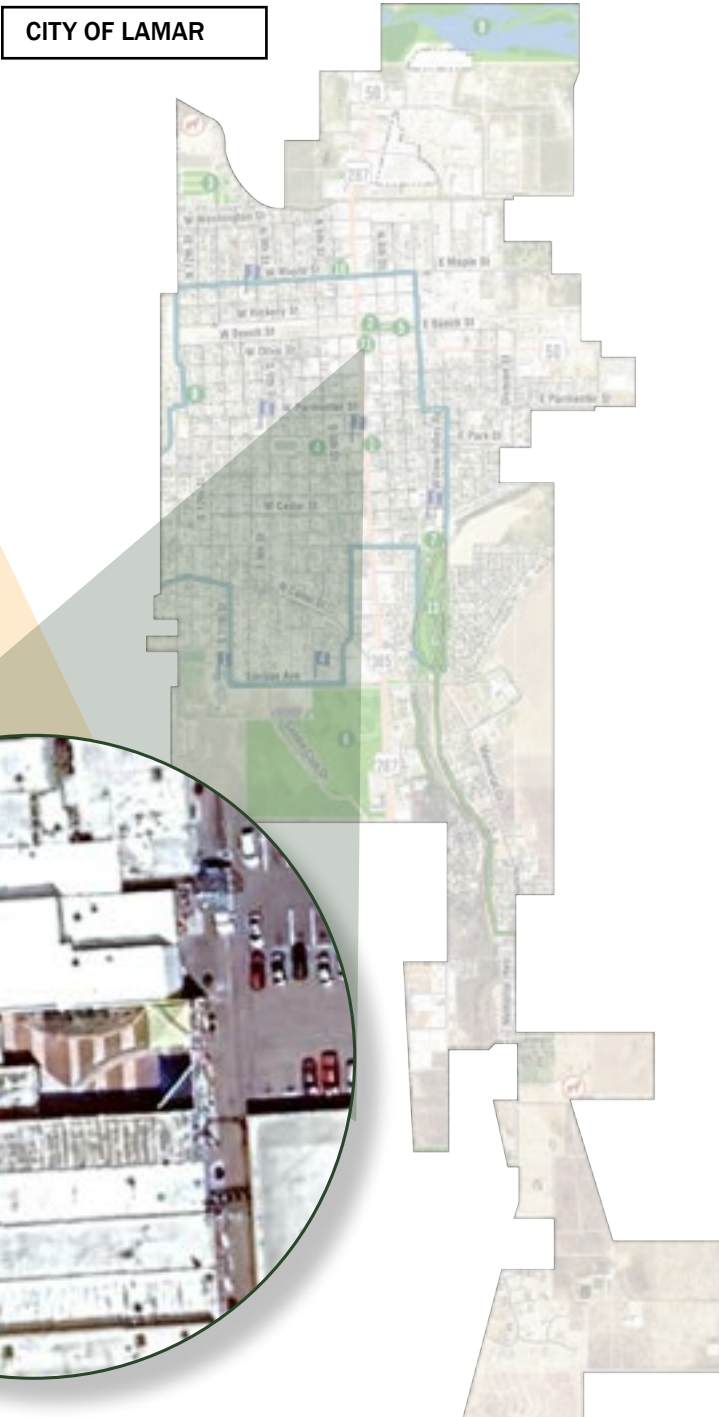
The Shore Arts Center Pocket Park in Lamar, Colorado, is a small urban green space adjacent to the Shore Arts Center on South Main Street. Established in 2017, it replaced a gravel parking lot with a colorful and functional gathering area featuring murals by local artist Jeremy Cooper, built-in seating, and LED lighting.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

-  STAGE
-  PUBLIC ART
-  BENCHES/SITE FURNISHINGS

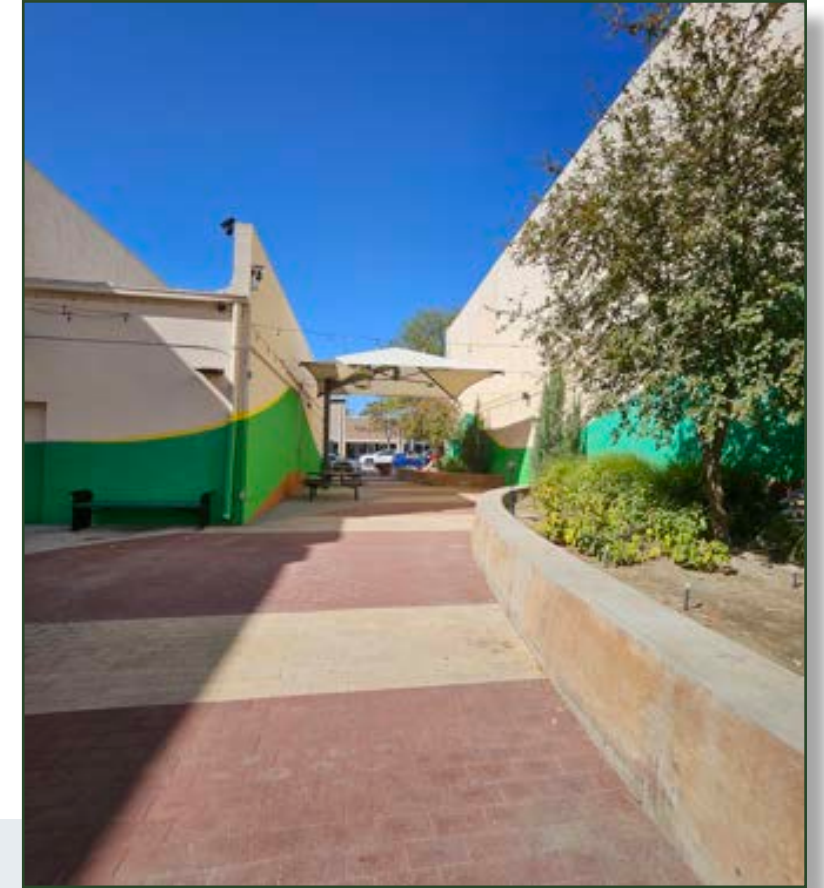
## QUICK FACTS

-  **SIZE:**  
± .25 ACRE
-  **LOCATION:**  
115 SOUTH MAIN
-  **ZONING:**  
C1 COMERCIAL DISTRICT



## OBSERVATIONS

In 2019, the park was enhanced with three umbrella-style shade structures to improve comfort and usability. Today, the park serves as a convenient and artistic amenity for downtown visitors, providing a shaded spot for sitting, socializing, and informal community use, all designed to complement Lamar's downtown revitalization efforts.





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

**POSITIVE FEEDBACK:**

- Frequently used for community events
- Provides a new way for pedestrian traffic to access Main Street

**CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:**

- *No specific concerns stated*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider an eastward expansion into the adjacent parking lot to help create connection to Enchanted Forest



PARK FACILITIES

# ENCHANTED FOREST

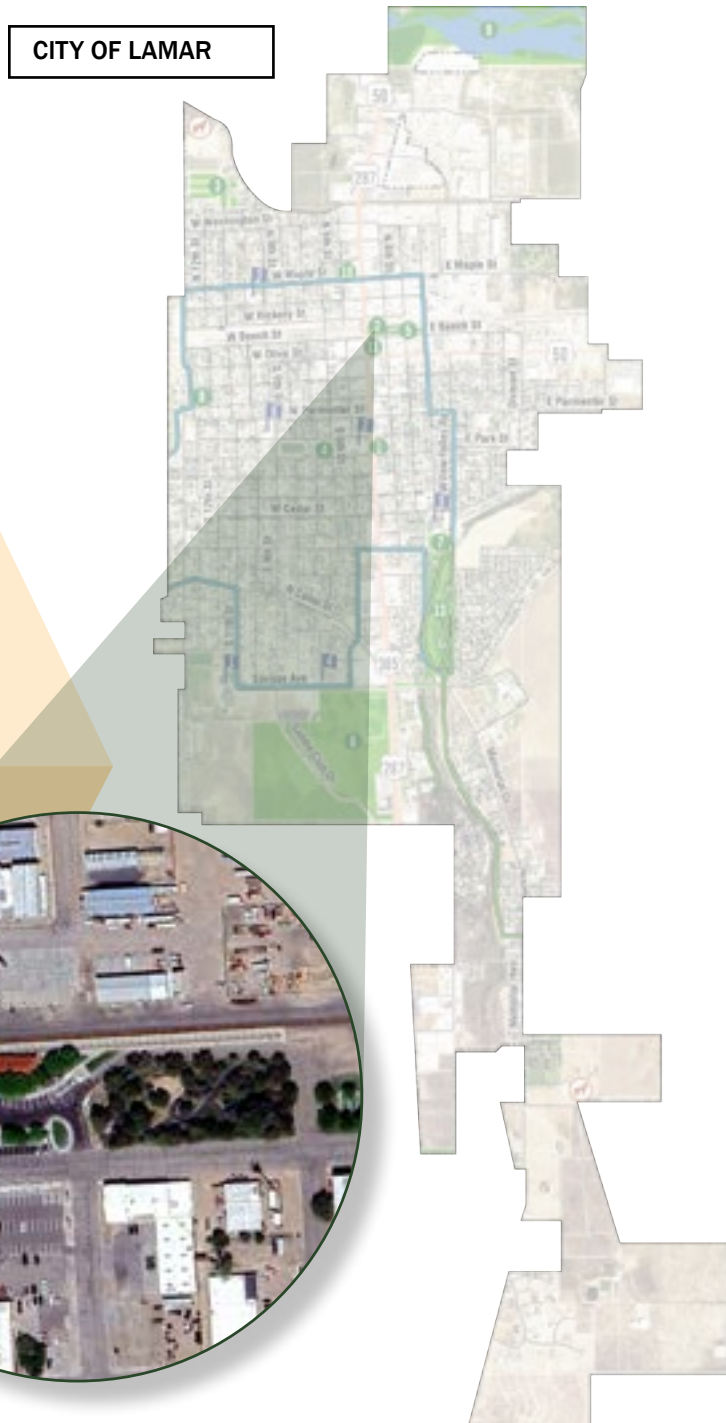
Enchanted Forest is a small, tree-shaded community area located at 4th & Beech that offers a paved pathway, a central rock feature, and pet-friendly amenities like clean-up stations. Though its historical origins are not well documented, the site is officially recognized among Lamar's parks and serves local residents as a quiet, accessible place for walking, dog walking, and casual outdoor use. It is located adjacent to the Amtrak stop, providing a scenic point for travelers disembarking trains into Lamar.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

- STAGE
- WALKING PATHS
- HORSESHOE COURTS
- FORMALIZED PARKING

## QUICK FACTS

- SIZE:**  
± 3 ACRE
- LOCATION:**  
4TH & BEECH
- ZONING:**  
I2 INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT



## OBSERVATIONS

This space is known for its mature trees and offers shade to visitors, making it popular in the heat of summer. It also offers a series of horseshoe courts that are open to the public. It supports community events such as Oktoberfest and Cinco De Mayo, highlighting its role within downtown Lamar's network of public gathering spaces.





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

### POSITIVE FEEDBACK:

- Frequently used for community events
- Appreciated for its shade during summer months

### CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:

- Noted for having homeless and drug activity.
- A light near Santa's house has been out for months, making the area feel unsafe.
- Requests for more picnic tables to accommodate events and food trucks.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a tree management plan for existing trees in "The Forest" (aeration, fertilization)
- Tree Sponsorships used to exist to help care for individual trees – this project could be revitalized to help instill stewardship
- Consider developing empty land north of horseshoe courts, potential for stage relocation (opportunity site). More detail on this site can be found on page 79.
- Study the depot site, Enchanted Forest, Horseshoe Courts, and opportunity zone as a whole unit to determine how the space can better facilitate community programming
- Meet with organizers of community events to gather input about how this space currently serves their events and potential areas for improvement









PARK FACILITIES

# LAMAR SPORTS COMPLEX

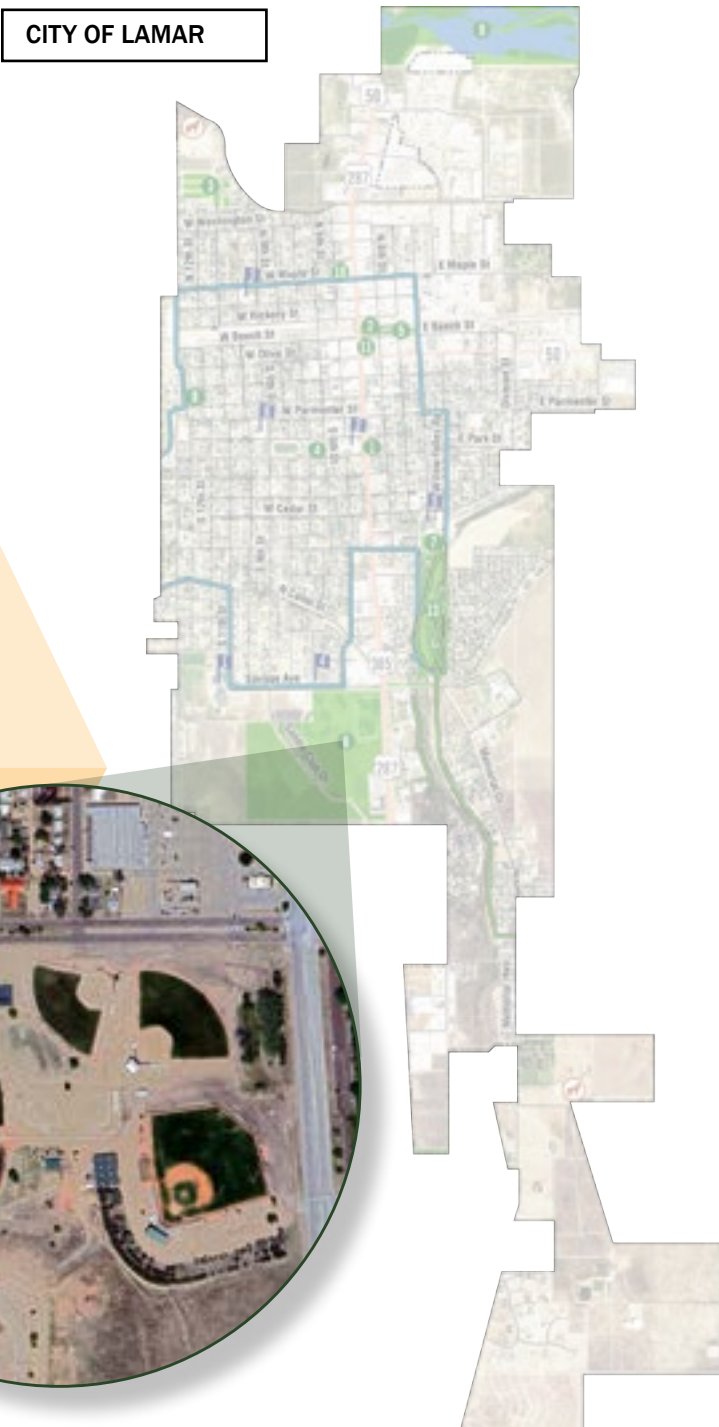
The Lamar Sports Complex, located at 2035 Saddle Club Drive, serves as a key athletic facility for the region. Originally established in the 1950s, this historic set of ballfields has undergone substantial upgrades in recent years. Funded in part by two grants from Great Outdoors Colorado totaling \$539,822, improvements included the construction of seven fields, new seating and bullpens, enhanced lighting, updated scoreboards, and added restroom facilities. These enhancements have expanded the facility's capacity to host a wider range of programs and sporting events, including youth baseball and softball leagues as well as collegiate-level play. This has not only increased usage but also supported local economic activity by attracting tournaments to Lamar.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

-  BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FIELDS
-  RESTROOMS
-  SHADE PAVILIONS
-  SITE FURNISHINGS
-  WALKING PATHS
-  PLAYGROUND

## QUICK FACTS

-  **SIZE:**  
± 136 ACRES
-  **LOCATION:**  
4TH & BEECH
-  **ZONING:**  
EA EDUCATION AGRICULTURE DISTRICT



## OBSERVATIONS

Though detailed historical documentation beyond its 1950s construction is limited, the Sports Complex clearly represents a long-term municipal investment in athletics and youth recreation. In practice, the Lamar Sports Complex functions as a central venue for community engagement, supporting athletic development, informal recreation, and event-driven gatherings. Its upgraded facilities help ensure year-round usability, while fostering local participation and enhancing Lamar's visibility as a destination for sports-related activities.





# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

**POSITIVE FEEDBACK:**

- Location is appreciated for ease of access
- Widely used by community
- Regional draw

**CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:**

- Shade and seating are both lacking, especially for larger events
- Restroom access, some state that the restrooms are closed during early season practices
- Requests for more picnic tables to accommodate events and food trucks.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create more opportunities for parking, shade, and formalized walking paths
- Perform ADA study to confirm what areas are compliant. Prioritize ADA compliancy when considering future development
- Refer to 2015 Plan for parking, connectivity, and ADA improvements
- Explore opportunity to partner with Community College and County to use available space in this area
- The informal bike park to the southwest of the site is an area of opportunity for formalization. More detail on this site is available on page 76



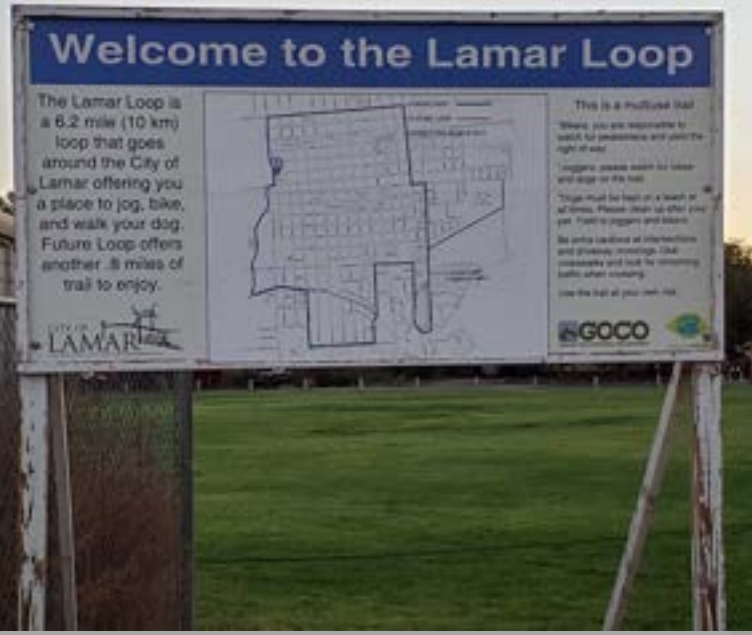
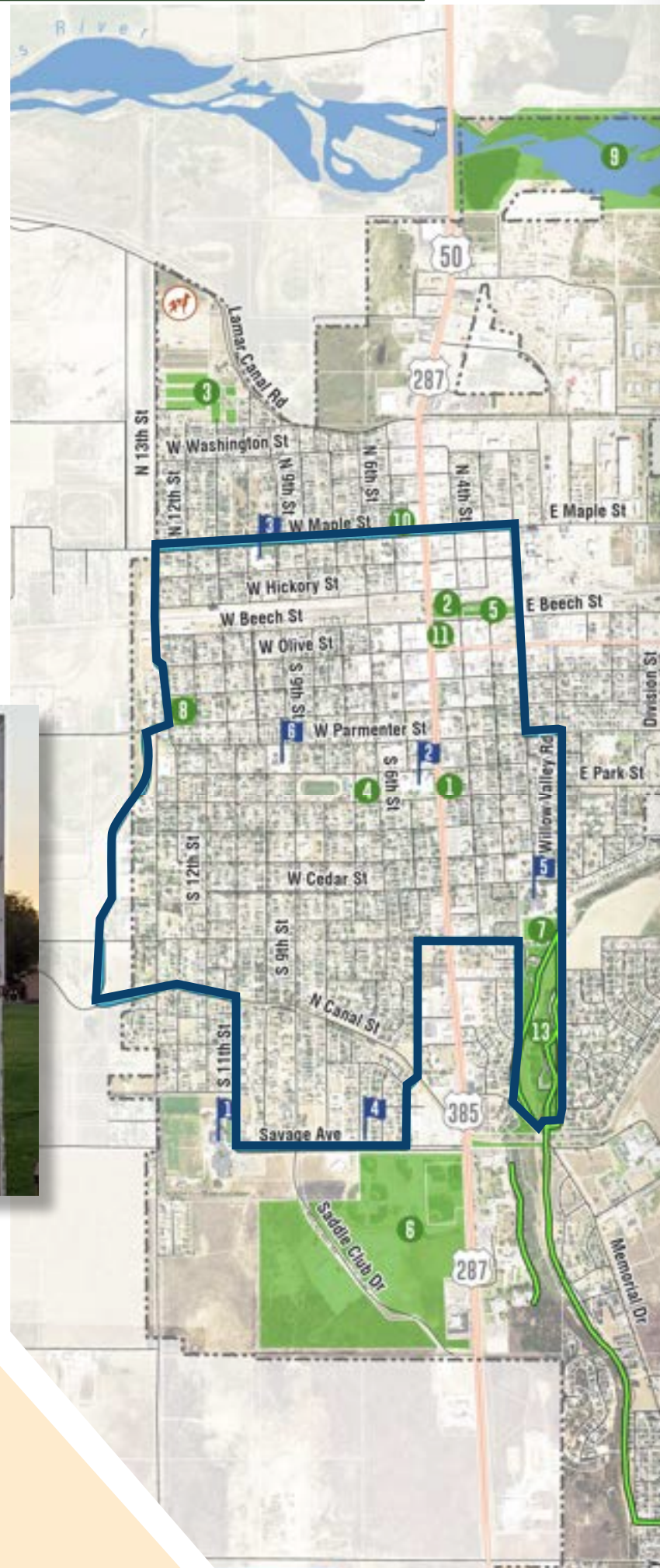


TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

# LAMAR LOOP

The Lamar Loop in Lamar is a popular multi-use recreational trail that circles the community and provides residents and visitors with a safe and scenic place to stay active. The loop is approximately 6.2 miles (10 kilometers) long, with additional trail segments extending its reach, and it is designed for walking, jogging, biking, and other outdoor activities.

The mostly paved trail travels around the city limits and connects neighborhoods, parks, schools, and recreational areas, making it both a fitness resource and a way to explore Lamar's surroundings. As part of Lamar's outdoor amenities, the Lamar Loop encourages healthy lifestyles while offering views of local parks, green spaces, and the open southeastern Colorado landscape.



## QUICK FACTS

 **TRAIL LENGTH**  
6.2 MILES (10 KM)

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

**POSITIVE FEEDBACK:**

- Appreciated as a walking and running route
- Used for community events and is known as a nice walk to show visitors around town

**CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS:**

- Concerns about safety, suggesting better lighting in certain areas
- Poor signage causes confusion on where the Loop makes turns
- Some sections are unattractive or poorly maintained, with many users stating they feel unsafe in some neighborhoods along the Loop
- Certain areas conflict with parking areas and traffic
- Many individuals wish the loop incorporated North Gateway Park

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Perform a study on the Lamar Loop to formally explore potential expansions and developments of the Loop.
  - » Consider a northward expansion into North Gateway Park, potentially increasing the length of the Loop
- Consider updating/replacing signage along the route to ensure consistency and clarity



## COMMUNITY ASSETS

# COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Lamar Community Building is the central indoor facility for athletics, fitness, events, and emergency operations within the community. Usage levels are high, but the facility is operating under significant strain.

Staffing levels are insufficient relative to operating hours and facility demands. Supervisory staff covering front-desk duties reduces operational efficiency and limits program support. A revised staffing model emphasizing additional part-time coverage to support strategically placed full-time positions is recommended to improve service delivery and staff sustainability.

Facility maintenance and modernization needs include gymnasium lighting access and safety, phased replacement of aging fitness equipment, locker room upgrades, and mechanical system improvements. Conversion to LED lighting and installation of safer access solutions should be prioritized.

The Community Center's role in emergency operations should be fully formalized, including storage, generator integration, and coordination protocols. Rental demand remains strong, and periodic benchmarking of rental fees against regional markets is recommended to ensure financial alignment while maintaining community affordability.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Revise staffing model with added part-time support and strengthened full-time roles
- Align staffing levels with facility demand to improve efficiency and sustainability
- Prioritize LED conversion, safety upgrades, and phased equipment replacement
- Upgrade locker rooms and mechanical systems
- Formalize emergency operations planning and generator integration
- Benchmark rental rates to ensure financial sustainability and affordability
- Explore FEMA funding for future projects

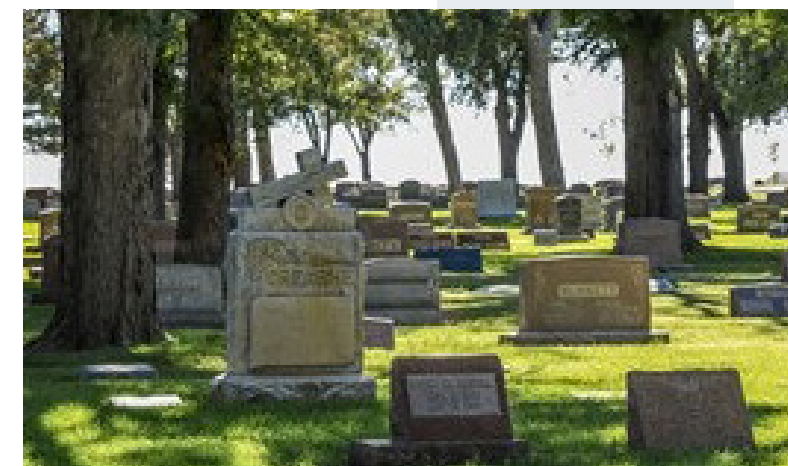
## COMMUNITY ASSETS

# CEMETERIES (FAIRMOUNT & RIVERSIDE)

The City of Lamar operates two cemeteries, Fairmount Cemetery and Riverside Cemetery, which together provide essential burial services while preserving important aspects of the community's history and identity. Continued stewardship ensures both cemeteries remain accessible, well maintained, and capable of meeting current and future community needs.

**Fairmount Cemetery** serves as the City's primary active burial site and supports ongoing interments. As the primary operational cemetery, it requires consistent grounds maintenance, irrigation management, roadway upkeep, and accurate recordkeeping. Long-term planning is important to ensure adequate burial capacity and to guide future improvements that maintain functionality, accessibility, and appearance.

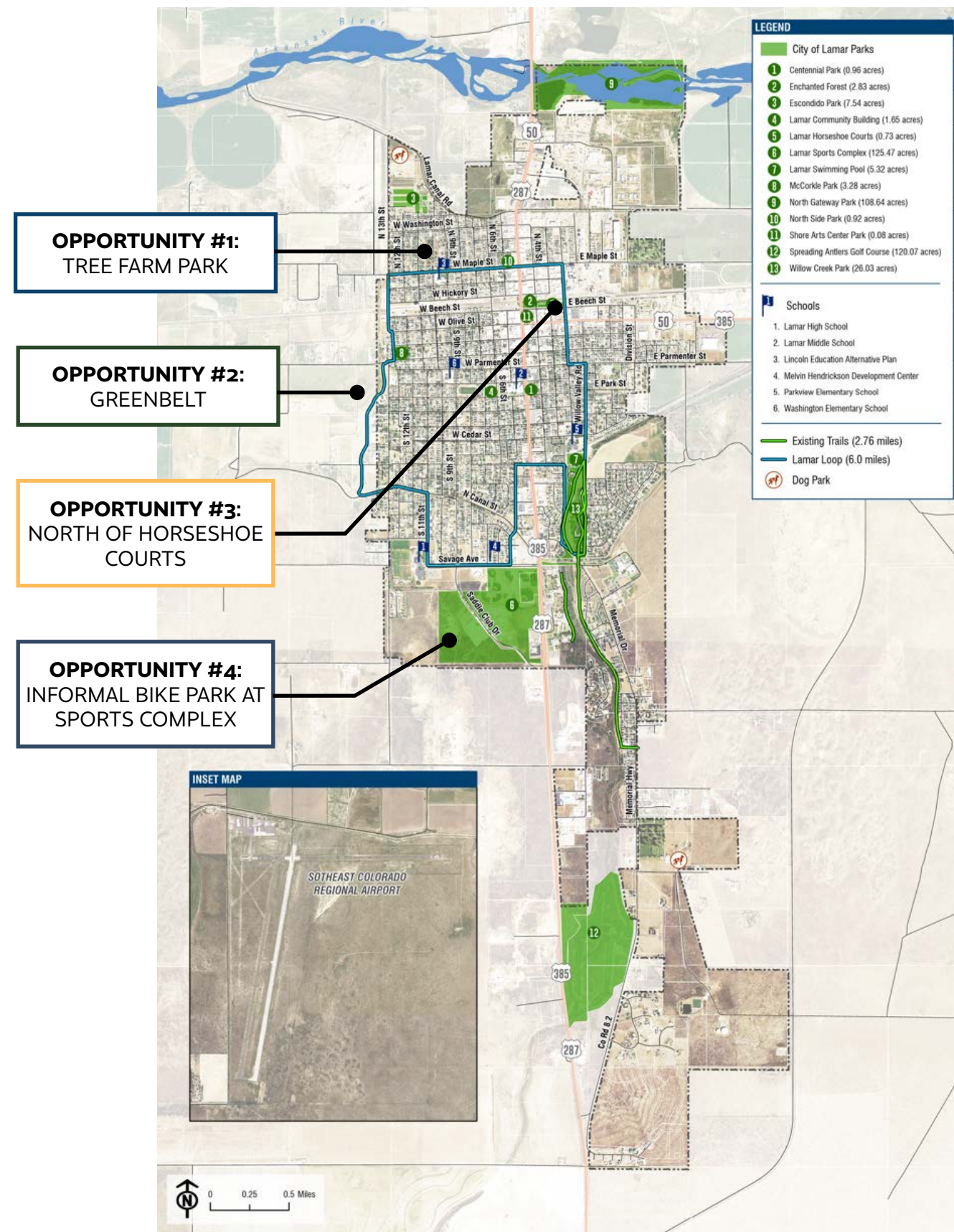
**Riverside Cemetery** is the City's older historic cemetery and reflects Lamar's early development and heritage. Maintenance efforts focus on preserving aging monuments, maintaining safe access, and protecting the character of the site. Continued care and preservation support the cemetery's historical significance while ensuring it remains a respectful and accessible place for visitors and families.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Perform a headstone count at each cemetery and keep an updated log
- Identify elements in need of historical preservation at Riverside Cemetery and create a maintenance plan

# OPPORTUNITY SITES



## OPPORTUNITY #1: TREE FARM PARK

Tree Farm Park is an informally used space just north of the Lincoln Education Alternative Plan building. It currently houses a tree farm, underused community garden, and informal walking path.

Potential reuse options may include:

- Formalizing walking paths/creating a natural loop
- Revitalizing community garden



## OPPORTUNITY #2: GREENBELT

The Greenbelt is an informal strip of land that contains well-maintained walking paths. It is a large part of the Lamar Loop on the west side of the city. There are some underdeveloped pieces of land located along this area.

A potential reuse option may include:

- Conducting a separate study to assess trail feasibility



## OPPORTUNITY #3: NORTH OF HORSESHOE COURTS

A strip of undeveloped land exists just north of the Horseshoe Courts, directly adjacent to the Enchanted Forest.

A potential reuse option may include:

- Expanding park features/amenities from Enchanted Forest into this area



## OPPORTUNITY #4: INFORMAL BIKE PARK

An official biking area/pump track exists to the southwest of the Sports Complex. Many trails have already been established by heavy use.

A potential reuse option may include:

- Formalizing a pump track in this area and providing park amenities such as shade, seating, and better access

# IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation chapter outlines the City of Lamar’s strategic approach to advancing key facility and operational initiatives. This section provides a structured framework to translate assessments and recommendations into actionable steps, ensuring resources are prioritized effectively and projects are executed efficiently. It includes a Priority Matrix to identify the most critical and time-sensitive actions, an Operations Analysis and Recommendations section to guide day-to-day improvements, and guidance on Funding Opportunities and Potential Partnerships to support sustainable implementation. Finally, the chapter concludes with Next Steps, offering a clear roadmap for moving initiatives from planning to execution while maintaining alignment with community needs and municipal priorities.

## OPERATION ANALYSIS

Lamar offers a solid base of youth sports and facility-based programming; however, analysis revealed a program imbalance that limits participation among seniors, adults, families, and non-sport users. Expanding offerings for older adults, wellness-focused participants, creative and arts-based users, and intergenerational households represents a meaningful opportunity to improve equity and broaden community impact.

Operational systems and data tracking represent a critical opportunity for improvement. The transition from the Active system to Tyler software should be approached as a strategic initiative rather than solely a technology upgrade. Recreation staff should be actively involved in system configuration to ensure that registration, scheduling, financial reporting, and participation tracking align with operational needs and will be completed on a regular basis. A standardized reporting framework should be established to track participation by program and age group, cost recovery and subsidy levels, customer satisfaction, and facility utilization. The absence of consistent historical data limited analysis during this planning effort and underscores the importance of improved tracking moving forward.

Specific recommended reports and performance metrics to support improved decision-making and long-term planning are outlined in Appendix E.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Parks and Recreation Department maintains several important partnerships that enhance recreational opportunities, improve resource efficiency, and support community vitality. While many of these relationships already exist, formalizing them through written agreements and coordinated planning will ensure their long-term effectiveness and mutual benefit.

### **PROWERS SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-2:**

Partnership with Prowers School District RE-2 provides opportunities for shared use of athletic fields, gymnasiums, and recreational facilities. Formal agreements will help clarify scheduling, maintenance responsibilities, and long-term capital planning, maximizing public access while reducing duplication of facilities.

### **PROWERS COUNTY:**

Coordination with Prowers County supports shared recreational assets, trail connectivity, and community programming. Formalizing this partnership will strengthen collaborative planning efforts and improve efficiency in maintenance, event hosting, and future recreation investments.

### **LAMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE:**

Collaboration with Lamar Community College enhances access to specialized facilities, supports recreational programming, and creates opportunities for joint events, workforce development, and student engagement. This partnership is especially important at Escondido Fields. Formal agreements will help align facility use, scheduling, and program coordination.

### **PROWERS ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

Partnership with Prowers Economic Prosperity plays a key role in promoting parks, trails, and recreational amenities as tourism assets. Strengthening this relationship will support coordinated marketing, event attraction, and recreation-based economic development initiatives.

### **COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE:**

Coordination with Colorado Parks and Wildlife is critical to the development and enhancement of the North Gateway area and other natural resource-based recreation opportunities. Formal collaboration will support conservation, trail connectivity, habitat protection, and expanded outdoor recreation access.

Formalizing these partnerships will improve operational clarity, strengthen funding opportunities, enhance recreational services, and ensure a coordinated approach to meeting current and future community needs.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN & POTENTIAL TIMELINE

### PHASE 1: QUICK WINS & IMPROVEMENTS

- Identify and implement small scale, high-visibility projects with smaller budget impact.
- Engage stakeholders early to build momentum and demonstrate progress
- Continue establishing consistency in data tracking, operational systems, and maintenance plans.

### PHASE 3: MAXIMIZE EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES

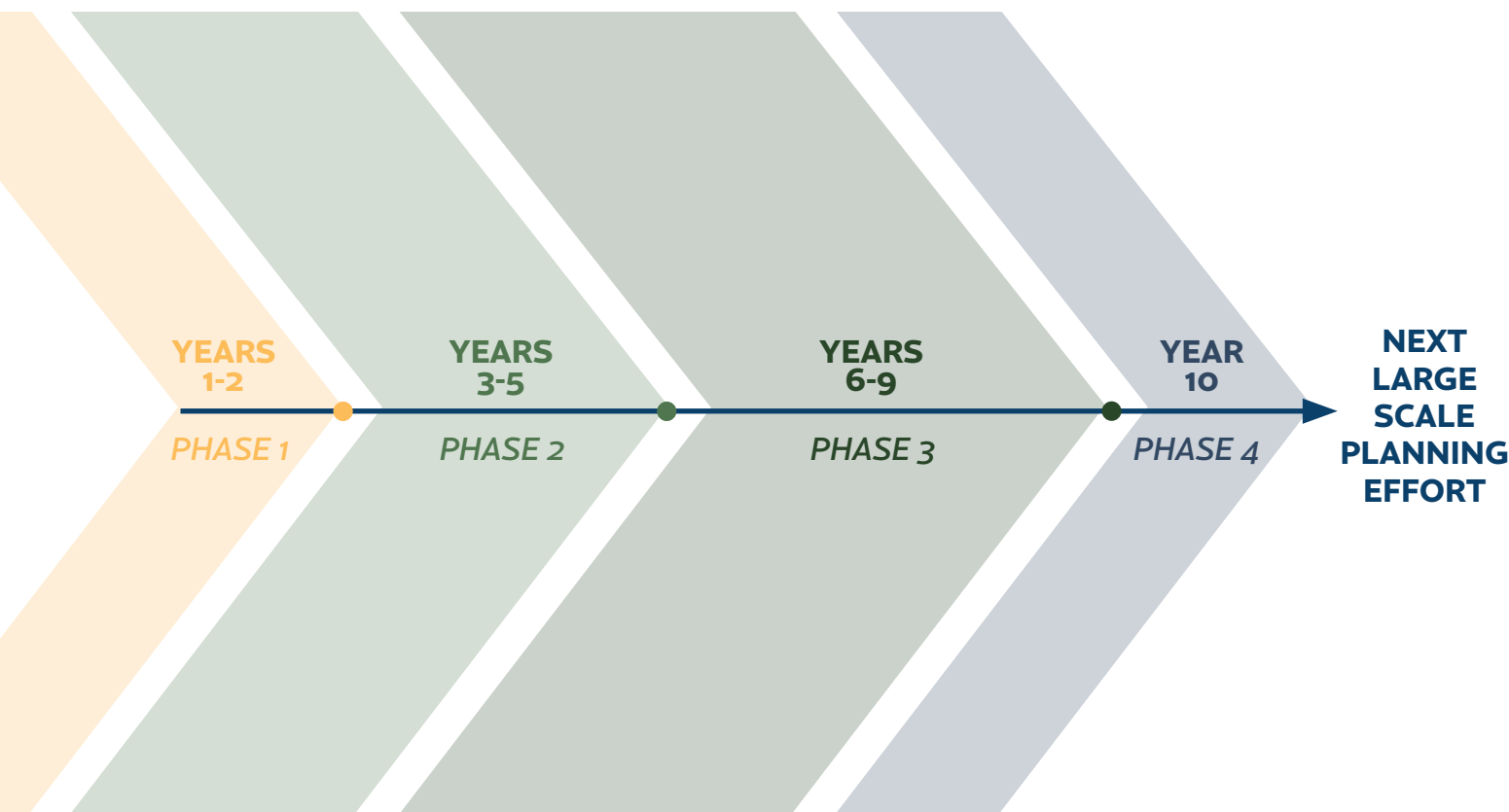
- Complete all feasible improvements within current facilities and partnership opportunities
- Showcase completed projects to the community to build trust and support.
- Assess public support for a larger-scale plan or funding initiative.

### PHASE 2: STRATEGIC PLANNING & PARTNERSHIPS

- Explore and finalize written agreements with key partnerships to ensure longevity.
- Begin mid-scale projects that align with long-term goals and have moderate budget impact.
- Explore and apply to funding opportunities for more ambitious projects

### PHASE 4: REASSESSMENT OF GOALS

- Reevaluate long-term Parks and Recreation needs based on completed work and remaining gaps.
- Prepare a comprehensive proposal for voter consideration, grounded in demonstrated progress and clear future needs.



## PRIORITY MATRIX

LOCATION	TASK	PRIORITY
All	Perform ADA audits on all existing parks and facilities	HIGH
All	Establish formal documentation for procedures & maintenance	HIGH
All	Implement new recreation software	HIGH
Willow Creek Park	Replace aging playground equipment	HIGH
Willow Creek Park	Develop a park foundation to help support repairing historical elements	HIGH
North Gateway Park	Increase planting and trees throughout park	HIGH
All	Perform irrigation audits on all existing parks and facilities where applicable	HIGH
Escondido Fields	Formalize parking lot by paving and striping	HIGH
Lamar Loop	Update/replace signage along the full route	HIGH
Community Building	Revise staffing model/align staffing levels with facility demand	HIGH
All	Establish broader program mix to expand opportunity to older adults	MED
North Gateway Park	Improve water access at key locations	MED
North Gateway Park	Improve fish habitat and water quality by working with CPW	MED
Northside Park	Trim/remove trees to minimize safety concerns	MED
Escondido Fields	Increase shade with planting or structures	MED
Escondido Fields	Improve ADA access with paved pathways & designated parking	MED
Enchanted Forest	Develop tree management plan & reintroduce Tree Sponsorships	MED
North Gateway Park	Improve signage leading towards park on Crystal Road and Valco Road	MED
Willow Creek Park	Implement circulation modifications at the south side of the park	LOW
North Gateway Park	Expand dog park to include larger natural area	LOW
Northside Park	Replace aging shade structures, woodchips, and playground equipment	LOW
Sports Complex	Implement circulation and parking modifications	LOW
Lamar Loop	Perform independent study to formally explore potential expansions	LOW
Community Building	Convert to LED lighting	LOW
Community Building	Upgrade locker room and mechanical systems	LOW
Cemeteries	Perform headstone count	LOW

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants are available to cities, counties and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50 percent match. All funded projects are taken under perpetuity by the National Park Service and must only be used for outdoor recreational purposes. Development and renovations of projects must be maintained for a period of 25 years or the life of the manufactured goods.

### Recreational Trails Program

The federal "Recreational Trails Program" (RTP), was created through the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRFTA) as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and reauthorized by the MAP-21. This program provides funding assistance for acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of both motorized and nonmotorized recreation trails. By law, 30 percent of each State's RTP funding must be earmarked for motorized trail projects, 30 percent for nonmotorized trail projects and the remaining 40 percent for diversified (diversified) motorized and nonmotorized trails or a combination of either. The RTP program can provide up to 80 percent federal funding on approved projects and requires a minimum 20 percent non-federal funding match.

### Nonmotorized Trail Grants

The mission of CPW's Trails Program is to promote understanding and stewardship of Colorado's outdoors by providing opportunities for the public use and support of Colorado's diverse system of trails. The grant program is a partnership among Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Colorado Lottery, the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

### Fishing is Fun Program

This program, funded by the Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW) Division of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (CDNR) aims to improve angling opportunities in Colorado. The Division awards up to \$400,000 in matching grants to local and county governments, parks and recreation departments, water districts, angling organizations and other related organizations annually. Potential uses of funds include stream and river habitat improvements, access improvements, perpetual easements, and lake habitat improvements, fish retention structures, and new fishing ponds, as well as amenity updates including shelters, benches, and restrooms.

### Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHP)

This state-wide program supports the private protection of important wildlife habitats and/or the provision of wildlife-related recreational access to the public. This program is voluntary for private landowners but little funds from a partnership between Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and revenue generated by the sale of habitat stamps to create conservation easements, access easements, and fee title purchases.

### Shooting Range Grants

This program provides matching grants to local and county governments, sportsmen and outdoor recreation groups, economic development agencies, and other organizations to establish, improve, or expand shooting ranges across the state. The program awards up to \$250,000 each year for these programs.

### Public Private Partnership

The Parks and Recreation Department can partner with local nonprofits and other community organizations to maintain existing parks or work to develop a new one as necessary. This partnership would formalize the non-government entity providing funding to the Department to upkeep and improve specifically designated parks. It should strive to establish such partnerships to help improve the City's parks and programs.

### Payment in Lieu Of (PILO)

Payment in Lieu Of (PILO) is a tool that helps promote better development in the City. Municipalities can use PILO to help developers get a project proposal approved by adjusting the requirement for dedication of land. PILO allows developers to pay the present value of the land that is originally required to be set aside for dedication. In this instance, a developer is less constrained by land availability for the project and the municipality still receives compensation for the dedication that it is owed. Payments are typically made in the form of a fixed sum. Fort Lupton should periodically evaluate its PILO formula to ensure that new developments are appropriately compensating the City for land.

## CONTACT US

### WEBSITE

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# APPENDIX A: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARIES



2025 LAMAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN  
**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**



**#1 - OKTOBERFEST**



**AVRES**

### WHAT IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?

At its core, public engagement is involving individuals and communities in the decision-making, planning, and implementation of projects or policies that affect them. It includes activities such as informational sessions, public consultations, and participatory decision-making.

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### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

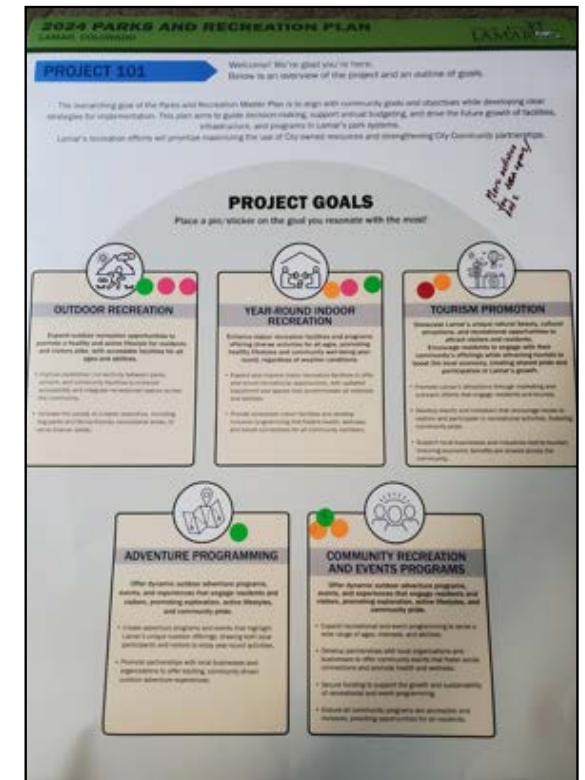
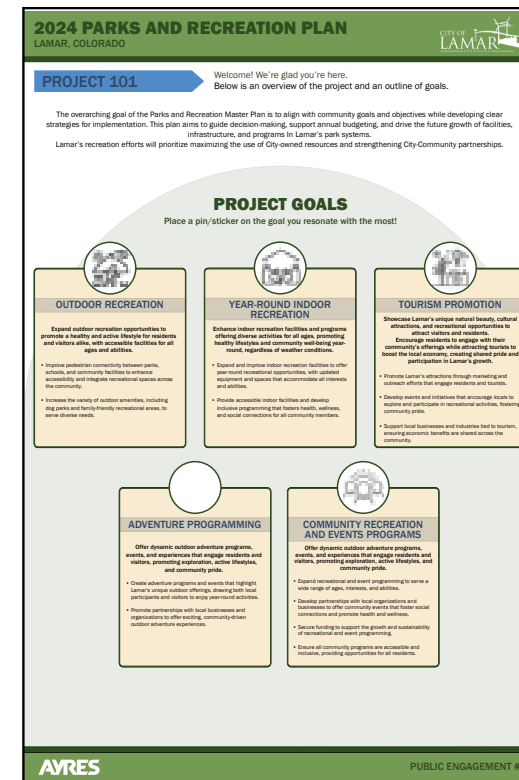
**OCT 5**

- Booth at Lamar Chamber Oktoberfest
- Park Visits for Designated Sites

### PROJECT 101

The Project 101 board was placed at the booth alongside the other boards with the intent of helping participants fully understand the site history, context, and complexities.

The information on this board provided an overarching goal of the project. It also went into detail on the 5 main project goals to give participants a solid understanding of the intent of the project. Participants were asked to vote for which goal they resonated with the most.



### KEY TAKEAWAYS

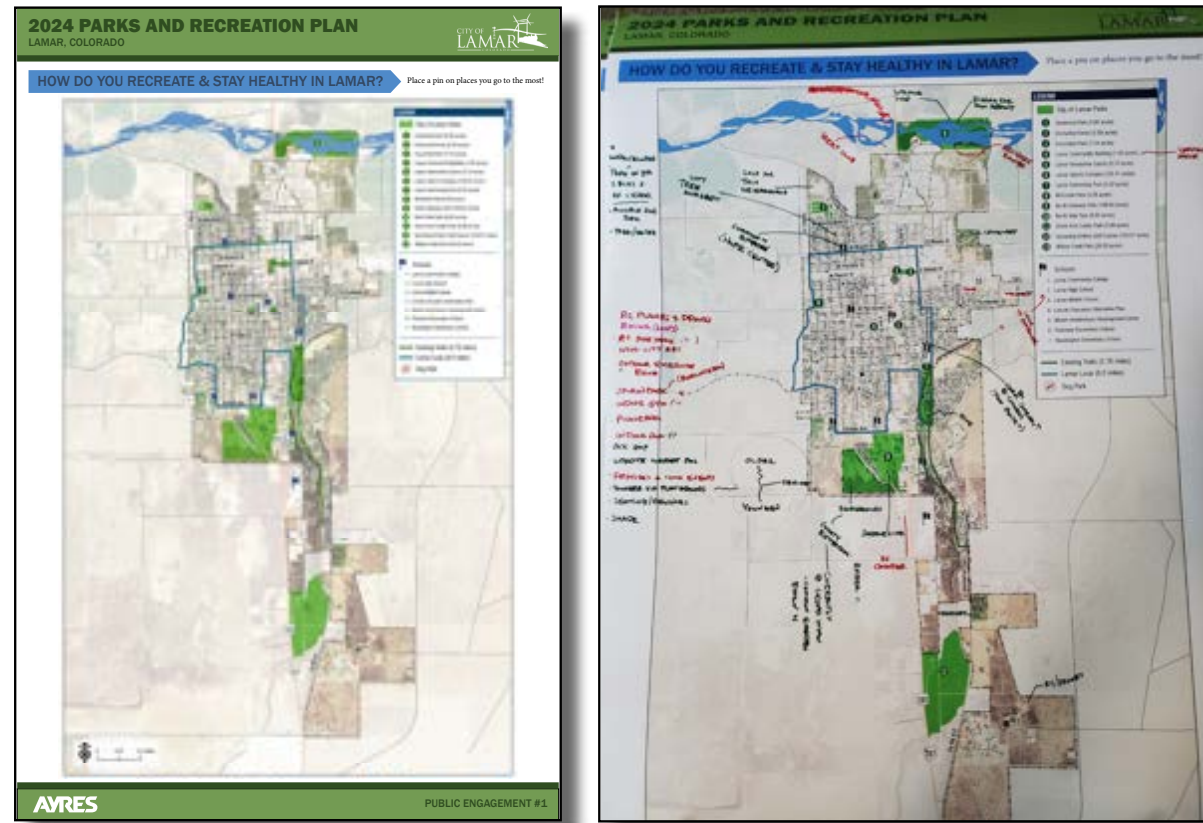
As a result of the dot voting exercise, it became clear that there was interest in all of the goals presented. The goals with the most amount of interest were:

- Outdoor Recreation
- Year Round Indoor Recreation
- Community Recreation and Events Programs

This indicates that Lamar residents have a strong interest in recreation, especially when organized by/with community members.

### HOW DO YOU RECREATE AND STAY HEALTHY IN LAMAR?

This board aimed at understanding how Lamar residents utilize their current parks system. It asked participants to highlight areas that they go to often, and what improvements could be made to these areas.



#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

As a result of the dot voting exercise, it became clear that there was interest in all of the goals presented. The goals with the most amount of interest were:

- Outdoor Recreation
- Year Round Indoor Recreation
- Community Recreation and Events Programs

This indicates that Lamar residents have a strong interest in recreation, especially when organized by/with community members.

### PARK STUDY #1: WILLOW CREEK PARK

This board focused on Willow Creek Park, one of the sites included in the Parks and Recreation update. It was chosen for an in-depth study due to it's size and current usage by Lamar residents. This board asked participants to call out parts of the park that they utilize and areas they believe can be improved.



### PARK STUDY #2: NORTH GATEWAY PARK

This board focused on Willow Creek Park, one of the sites included in the Parks and Recreation update. It was chosen for an in-depth study due to it's size and current usage by Lamar residents. This board asked participants to call out parts of the park that they utilize and areas they believe can be improved.

**2024 PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN**  
 LAMAR, COLORADO

NORTH GATEWAY PARK

What ideas do you have for how North Gateway Park can be improved?  
 Use markers to draw on the map below and share your ideas. If you'd rather write, use the box below to share your thoughts!

OTHER IDEAS? Write them in here!

AVRES
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT #1



## 2025 LAMAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



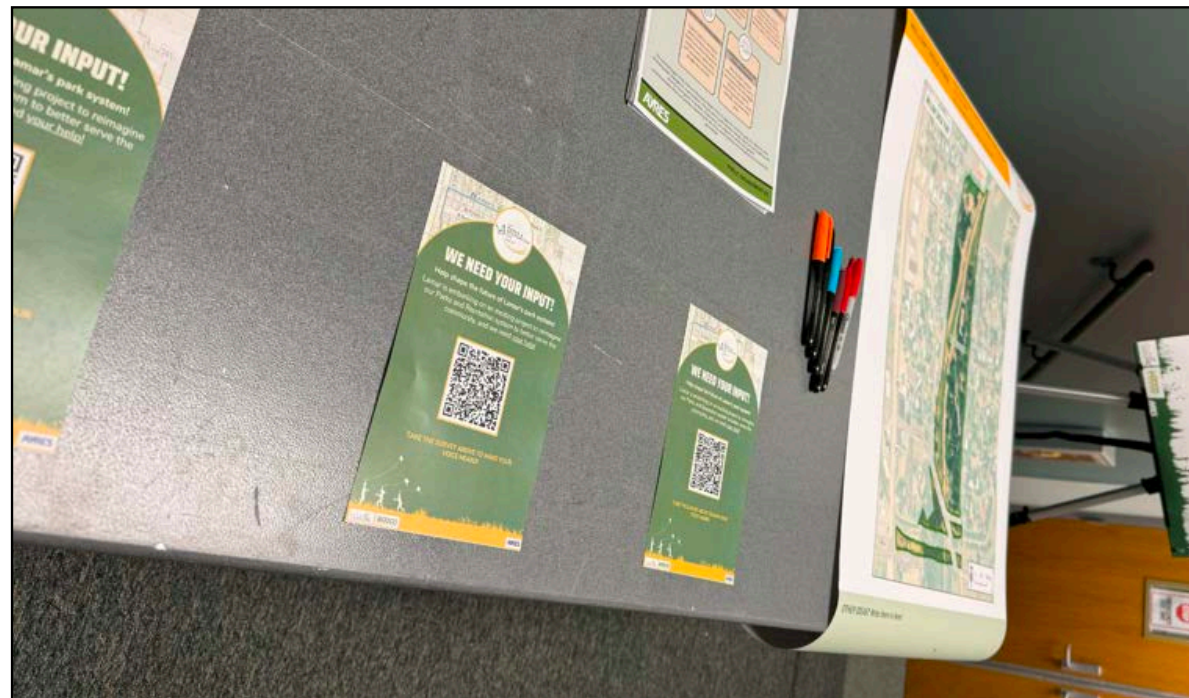
### #2 - THUNDER THROWDOWN



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**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**DEC 7**

- Booth at Thunder Throwdown Basketball Tournament
- Youth Advisory Committee Kickoff Meeting



**BOOTH AT THUNDER THROWDOWN**

A booth was set up at Thunder Throwdown, an annual high school basketball tournament that takes place in Lamar. At this public engagement station, game attendees were invited to write and draw on provided boards that detailed the project.

Additionally, the booth publicized a survey and encouraged all attendees to provide their feedback in this way. Flyers containing the QR code to the survey were posted throughout the venue by the Youth Advisory Committee.



**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

As a result of the conversations had at Thunder Throwdown, it is clear that the residents of Lamar are currently frustrated with their existing parks system. The following items were discussed at length with multiple attendees:

- Lack of adequate maintenance in multiple parks throughout the city
- Not enough programming for teens/young adults currently exists
- Improving existing facilities for more effective use



### YAC KICKOFF MEETING

The Youth Advisory Committee had their first official meeting during the weekend of Thunder Throwdown. During this meeting, the team were able to focus on the following topics:

- Introductions to Ayres staff and other committee members
- Project overview and timeline discussion
- Identifying goals for the future of the project
- Brainstorming future public engagement events



### 2025 LAMAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



### #3 - SENIOR SOCK HOP





**WHAT IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?**

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**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**FEB  
13**

Senior Sock Hop event with integrated public engagement opportunities



**SOCK HOP DANCE**

The Senior Sock Hop was a community event focused on providing a night of fun, entertainment, and food for the community's seniors. It was important for the Parks and Recreation Plan to gather input from this important demographic of Lamar's population.

At this event, Youth Advisory Committee members attended to help set up the event, serve food, and inform attendees about the Plan and gather input. Attendees were given the opportunity to fill out either an online or paper survey, as well as simply chat with YAC members to share their ideas.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY - SENIOR SOCK HOP



QUESTIONS	NOTES ON RESPONSES
How long have you lived in Lamar?	3.5 yrs
What types of things do you like to do around town?	Go to the Senior Center, Bowling at the City, Shopping at the Senior Center
What is your favorite thing to do in Lamar?	Craft projects
Do you like to visit the parks in Lamar? What do you like to do while you're there?	Take my grandkids to the park.
Do you have a favorite park in Lamar? Why?	The one is "George Island"
If you could create a new park in Lamar, what would it include?	lots of play equipment for children
Do you think the parks are accessible? If you use a walker or a wheelchair, are you able to move around?	Hard could be... walkable.
Do you feel that Lamar has changed over the last 20 years? Are there changes that you appreciate? What do you miss?	
appreciate? What do you miss?	
appreciate? What do you miss?	



**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

As a result of both the paper and digital surveys, the following elements should be considered when moving forward with planning efforts:

- Seniors use the parks primarily for senior center events, viewing grandchildren in sporting events, walking, and relaxing.
- The most commonly used parks by this age group are Willow Creek and North Gateway.
- Many individuals requested more low-impact active programming, such as pickleball courts, mini-golf, and cornhole. Other frequently mentioned desires include shaded social areas, safer walking paths, and youth-focused spaces.
- There is mixed feedback regarding accessibility. Some state that uneven terrain, lack of ramps, and limited handicap parking limit their use of the parks.



**2025 LAMAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**



**#4 - CINCO DE MAYO**





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**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**MAY  
3**

Booth at Cinco De Mayo community festival at the Enchanted Forest/Pocket Park



**CINCO DE MAYO FESTIVAL**

Lamar’s annual Cinco de Mayo festival brings together community members of all kinds to celebrate Hispanic heritage and traditions. The festival, full of artisan vendors, music, food, and activity for kids, was the perfect opportunity to gather input from all community members, but with a special focus on Spanish-speaking members.

A booth was set up as part of the festival and displayed public engagement boards in both English and Spanish. Through this effort, Ayres was able to gain valuable insight into the needs of this large and important part of Lamar’s community.

In addition to the dot-voting boards, Cinco de Mayo coloring pages were distributed to kids to help attract them to the booth and engage them in conversation.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY - CINCO DE MAYO



**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

As a result of the dot voting boards and conversation held at the event, the following takeaways were identified:

- Residents identified an indoor pool as their most sought after potential programming element. Other highly identified items were pickleball courts, more frisbee golf, a dog park, and playgrounds for young children.
- Community members claimed that they frequently use the parks system and enjoy the variety of events that Lamar has to offer.
- Given that the event was held at the Enchanted Forest, residents frequently commented in appreciation for the shade that the area provides.



**2025 LAMAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**



**#5 - LAMAR DAYS**





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**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**MAY  
3**

Booth at Lamar Days Rod Run @ Willow Creek Park



**LAMAR DAYS ROD RUN**

Representatives from Ayres Associates set up a public engagement booth at the 2025 Lamar Days Rod Run to gather public input. This engagement was focused on Willow Creek Park as this is where the event was held.

Several dot voting boards were presented, with materials in both English and Spanish, covering topics such as future programming and maintenance needs. Additionally, the ongoing survey continued to be publicized, this time by utilizing custom native seed packets that participants could take home and plant. Other branded merchandise was offered to help spread the word about the Plan, such as frisbees, dog bowls, stickers, keychains, and more.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY - LAMAR DAYS



**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

As a result of the dot voting boards and conversation held at the event, the following takeaways were identified:

- Residents identified an indoor pool as their most sought after potential programming element. Other highly identified items were pickleball courts, a public amphitheater, and playground equipment. This aligns with what was heard at Cinco de Mayo.
- Community members greatly enjoy Willow Creek Park as a community asset and enjoy the programming it currently offers. However, many find the disrepair of the historical elements disappointing and unfortunate.
- Some participants expressed interest in expanding the Lamar Loop, noting that they frequently use the Loop for personal exercise.



**2025 LAMAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**



**#6 - FREE SWIM DAY**





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### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**MAY  
3**

Booth at Lamar Days Rod Run @ Willow Creek Park



### FREE SWIM DAY

A booth was set up at Free Swim Day at the Lamar Swimming Pool on 7/12/24. This engagement, the sixth held for this Plan, was meant to engage with a wide variety of people, including community members, visitors from other towns, children, adults, parents, and more.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

As a result of the dot voting boards and conversation held at the event, the following takeaways were identified:

- An indoor pool is highly sought after to help house year-round swimming sports, and many community members travel to La Junta for sports practices or other indoor recreation. However, it has been determined that an indoor pool is not a practical option for development in the near future due from a cost perspective.
- Community members love the outdoor pool and the opportunities it brings to the community in the summer, but do feel that it needs better maintenance to continue performing the way it currently does.



2025 LAMAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN  
**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**



**#7 - FISHING TOURNAMENT**



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY - FISHING TOURNAMENT



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**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**AUG  
16**

Fishing Tournament held at North Gateway Park

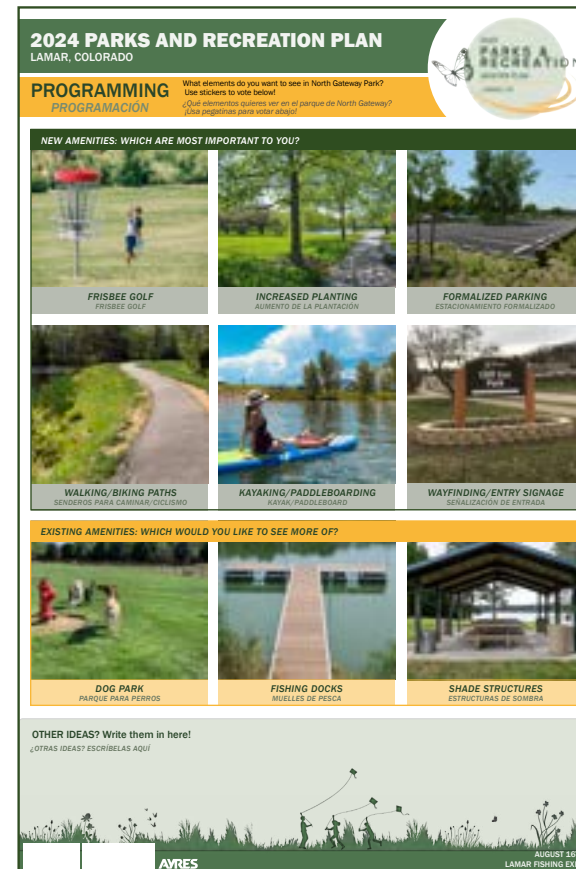




## FISHING TOURNAMENT

Representatives from Ayres Associates helped organize and attended a fishing tournament, held at North Gateway Ponds in August of 2024. The target of this engagement was to learn more about the community's desires regarding the North Gateway Ponds.

Several dot-voting boards were displayed, and conversations were held while in the setting of the Ponds. A raffle prize was also held to award individuals who caught the most fish. Valuable conversations were had regarding the future of the Ponds.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

As a result of the dot voting boards and conversation held at the event, the following takeaways were identified:

- Residents enjoy North Gateway Ponds as a method for accessing nature not too far from town. It is primarily used for fishing, walking, running, and water activities.
- Favorite current amenities include the swim beach, aquatic sports rental, fishing, and the new dog park.
- Community members generally stated that, although they love the new additions of the docks and ADA parking spaces, they would prefer for the Ponds to remain natural, unpaved, and relatively undeveloped.
- Common concerns include dust levels on windy days and lack of shade.

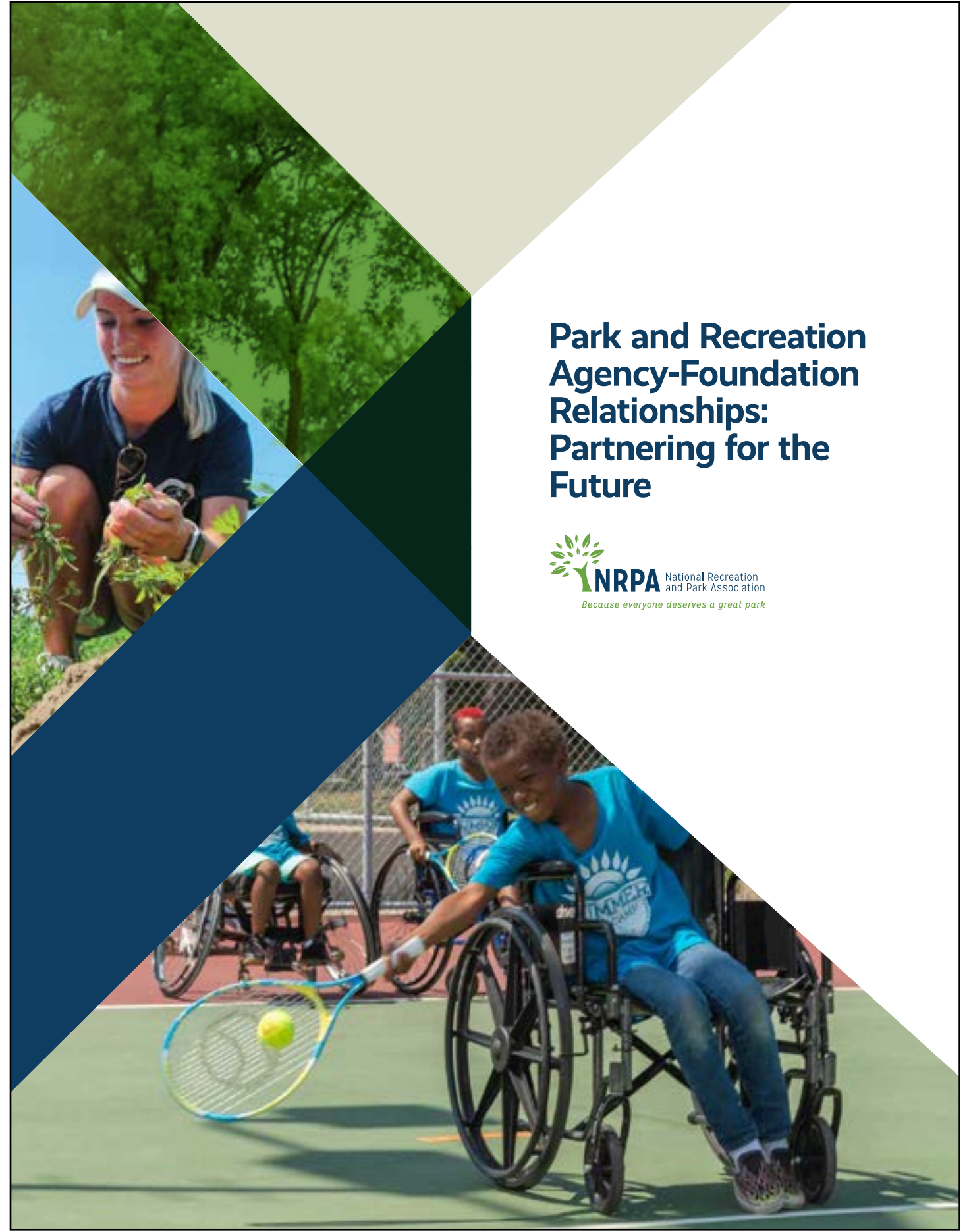


# APPENDIX B:

## PARK FOUNDATION REPORT

SOURCE: NRPA.ORG

REPORT NOT CREATED BY AYRES



### Park and Recreation Agency-Foundation Relationships: Partnering for the Future





PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH DAKOTA STATE PARKS

Children bike on a trail at South Dakota State Parks' Chief White Crane Recreation Area.

© NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

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**COVER PAGE:**  
 TOP IMAGE: A camp director at Glenview (Illinois) Park District shows campers how to weed the community garden at Historic Wagner Farm. Photo courtesy of Glenview Park District.

BOTTOM IMAGE: Children participate in a wheelchair tennis demonstration at St. Andrews Recreation Center in Los Angeles, hosted by the U.S. Tennis Association and in partnership with City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. Photo courtesy of Juan Carlos Chan.

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- Takeaways..... 4**
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# INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation is an essential local government service. Park and recreation professionals and their agencies deliver vital services, programming and amenities that millions of people enjoy every day. Well-funded park and recreation services advance community health and well-being, better prepare communities for the impacts of a changing climate and natural disasters, and help ensure equitable access to park and recreation amenities and their benefits. Studies conducted by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and others have consistently demonstrated strong public desire for local park and recreation agencies to have the necessary funding to deliver on their missions.

Funding mechanisms vary for the more than 10,000 park and recreation systems across the United States, but agencies typically draw the overwhelming majority of their funding from two sources: taxpayer support and revenue generated by agency activities (e.g., registration fees, sponsorships, concessions). In the case of the former, park and recreation leaders compete for limited tax revenue with other local government services including public safety, education, transportation and social services.

While local public park and recreation agencies receive considerable tax-based financial support and often are able to generate significant revenues themselves, they frequently must seek funding from other sources. One approach taken by many agencies is to partner with nonprofit park foundations or "friends groups." Park and recreation foundations can be crucial in fundraising, outreach/marketing, advocacy, volunteer organization, planning, operations and strategy. Such support may be more necessary than ever, given the budget and staffing issues precipitated by both the Great Recession and now the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

There is, however, a lack of research on the characteristics and conditions that lead to effective and sustainable relationships between park and recreation agencies and their nonprofit partners, particularly regarding the evidence-based best practices for maximizing the benefits provided through these relationships. To fill this information gap, NRPA commissioned a nationwide study of agency-foundation relationships. A team of researchers, led by Dr. Nick Pitas of the State University of New York-Brockport, surveyed park and recreation agency leaders and conducted a series of in-depth interviews with leaders of both public agencies and nonprofit foundations. The survey results and interview data serve as the basis for the key findings in this report.

People come out to twist, twirl and spin their way into summer with an evening of dancing and live music at an event hosted by St. Charles (Illinois) Park District.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. CHARLES PARK DISTRICT



During the opening of the Thomas James Knox Rink, hundreds of children visited Alum Creek Park South in Westerville, Ohio, to learn street hockey from the Columbus Blue Jackets at no charge.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTERVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION

# TAKEAWAYS

Park and recreation foundations are valuable partners for many local park and recreation agencies, facilitating the delivery of high-quality services in a variety of ways. Most park and recreation leaders view their agency-foundation relationships as largely positive and place a high value on their foundation's capacity to provide expertise and support for fundraising, community engagement and relationship building. Among the benefits park and recreation leaders seek from foundations are:

- Extra fundraising capacity
- Ability to serve beyond the scope of a traditional park and recreation agency
- Advocacy
- Expertise
- Flexibility arising from the fact that foundations are not government agencies

Leaders at park and recreation agencies consider their agency-foundation relationships to be productive and generally positive. The overwhelming majority of respondents sees the relationship as:

- Strong
- Close
- Effective



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTHONY IRACKI

Strong interpersonal relationships between leaders of agencies and foundations are a key factor in a successful agency-foundation partnership. These person-to-person ties are not enough, however, and strong organizational relationships at every level are necessary to create productive and stable agency-foundation partnerships that stand the test of time.

Park and recreation leaders place a high degree of importance on both soft and technical skills for their employees, such as:

- Leadership and decision making
- Professionalism
- Interpersonal skills
- Communications
- Goal setting
- Conflict resolution

Park and recreation leaders recognize several characteristics of successful agency-foundation relationships:

- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Community trust in both the agency and the foundation
- Fundraising capacity
- Aligned funding priorities

At the same time, park and recreation leaders acknowledge that a variety of challenges exist that can limit the effectiveness of an agency-foundation relationship:

- Organizational structure issues
- Unproductive interpersonal relationships
- Lack of key stakeholder understanding, buy-in and awareness
- Competition for scarce resources
- Equity and diversity deficiencies

Doug Kane (right), adult sports coordinator for Whitefish Bay Recreation (Wisconsin), stands next to one of his badminton program participants.



Pinecrest (Florida) Parks and Recreation staff show support for Breast Cancer Awareness Month at the Pinecrest Community Center Playground.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHELLE HAMMONTREE

# KEY FINDINGS

## PARK AND RECREATION LEADERS SEE FOUNDATIONS SUPPORTING THEIR AGENCIES IN A VARIETY OF CAPACITIES

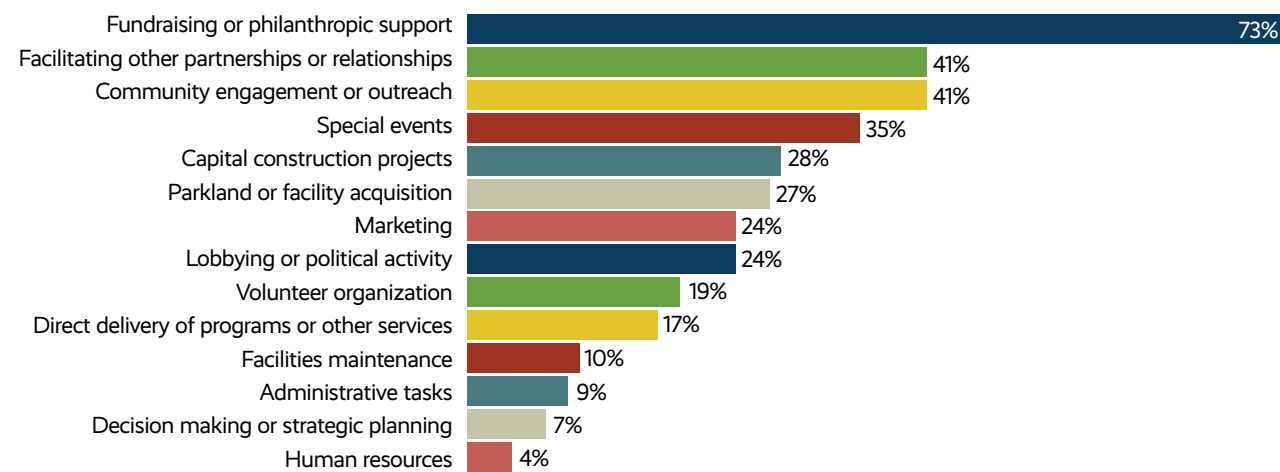
A condition of successful, productive relationships is a common set of expectations for working together. This holds true for the agency-foundation relationship. As such, it is perhaps not surprising that a majority of park and recreation leaders (73 percent of survey respondents) indicates their foundations are “extremely” or “very” important to their agency’s capacity to fundraise and nurture philanthropic support.

- Special events (35 percent of respondents cite as “extremely” or “very” important)
- Capital construction projects (28 percent)
- Parkland or facility acquisition (27 percent)
- Marketing (24 percent)
- Lobbying and political activity (24 percent)

But park and recreation leaders look to their foundations in areas beyond direct financial support. For example, two in five survey respondents indicate that their foundations are “extremely” or “very” important in facilitating other partnerships and relationships, as well as community engagement and outreach. Other services and activities in which park and recreation leaders see a role for their foundations include:

Park and recreation agency leaders view their foundations as much less important in day-to-day activities. For example, 10 percent or less of agency leaders see their foundations as “extremely” or “very” important to facility maintenance, administrative tasks and human resources.

### Park and Recreation Leaders Place a High Degree of Importance on Their Foundations’ Fundraising Support (Percent of Respondents Rating Specific Activities as “Extremely” or “Very” Important)



People take part in the DeKalb County Senior Olympics track and field event in Decatur, Georgia.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAWN CRIBB

Interview subjects — leaders of both agencies and foundations — note that even though the benefits of agency-foundation relationships go beyond financial support, the ability to quickly fund services outside the capacity and scope of a public agency budget is a primary desired outcome.

Many foundations are established typically in response to an acute need within a community such as a lack of funding for parks and recreation, deteriorating conditions in parks and recreation facilities or issues of inequitable distribution of recreation services.

Other key benefits from foundations include the capacity to act in ways beyond the scope of a traditional park and recreation agency, the freedom to advocate on behalf of park and recreation-related causes, the capacity to increase key stakeholder buy-in, a complementary set of skills and expertise, and flexibility arising from the fact that foundations are not government departments.

*“Our goal is to address [what is] really the heart and soul of the park system — the neighborhood parks. They had been underfunded for decades, and they weren’t able to receive additional resources.” [foundation leader]*

Community leaders also may launch a foundation with the goal of financing a specific landmark project such as a regional or destination park. In these instances, respondents highlight the need for foundations to be flexible in their focus and to evolve to serve other community needs after the completion of the initial project.

*“But what [the friends group] did is something we would never do. It worked with a local microbrewery, and we brewed a [park district name] beer that was for sale at [festival]. And it wasn’t just the beer that was a big hit. [They] worked with our volunteer groups to go out into our beehives that are throughout our district. They gathered 400 pounds of honey. They took the honey to the brewery. The brewery integrated the honey into the mix for the beer it made. So not only is that beer made with [agency] in mind — it’s a beer made with [agency] honey. Then take that one step further: a dollar from every six pack that was sold then goes back to the friends group.” [public leader]*

*“I would say, in the early 2000s, mid-2000s, we shifted or expanded beyond just capital projects... in some cases, we literally operate the facility, run programs, manage contracts. We do restoration work. I describe us as a small parks and rec department.” [foundation leader]*

### MOST — BUT NOT ALL — PARK AND RECREATION LEADERS DESCRIBE CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOUNDATIONS AS “EXTREMELY” OR “VERY” STRONG, CLOSE AND EFFECTIVE

Most park and recreation leaders consider their agency-foundation relationships to be productive, especially in terms of their strength, closeness and effectiveness.

- **Strong:** Eighty-nine percent of park and recreation leaders agree that their agency-foundation relationship is “strong.” Sixty-eight percent of respondents characterize the relationship as either “extremely” or “very” strong, while 21 percent are less enthusiastic and perceive the relationship as being “moderately” strong. Only eight percent of agency heads view their agency-foundation relationship as weak.
- **Close:** Ninety percent of park and recreation leaders agree that their agency-foundation relationship is “close.” Sixty-six percent of respondents characterize the relationship as either “extremely” or “very” close, while 24 percent perceive the relationship as “moderately” close. Only four percent of agency heads view their agency-foundation relationship as weak.

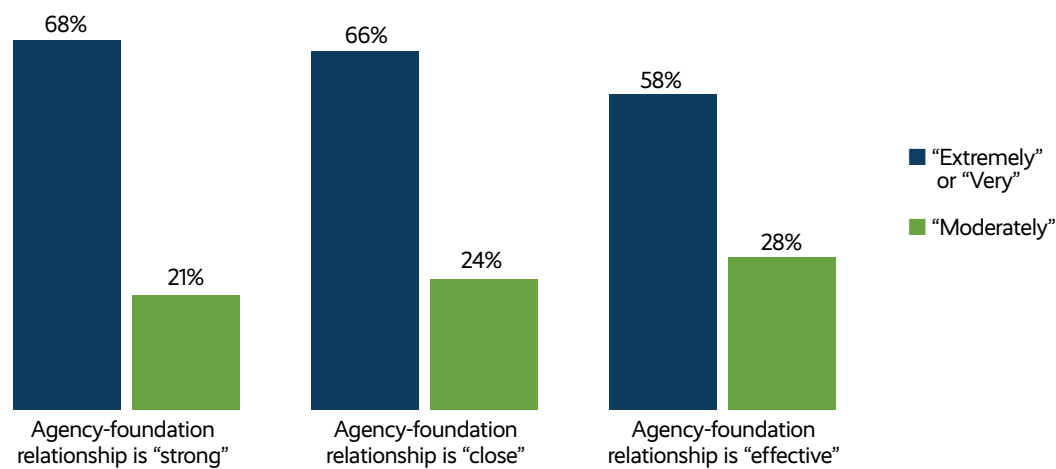
- **Effective:** Eighty-six percent of park and recreation leaders agree that their agency-foundation relationship is “effective.” Fifty-eight percent of respondents characterize the relationship as either “extremely” or “very” effective, while 28 percent perceive the relationship as “moderately” effective. Ten percent of agency heads view their agency-foundation relationship as weak.

Related to these positive relationships, leaders at both park and recreation agencies and foundations note several important characteristics of agency-foundation relationships:

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both organizations
- Community trust in both the agency and the foundation
- Fundraising capacity
- Frequent and purposeful communication
- Alignment of funding priorities

*“Being on the same page is a good place to start, just for a clear understanding of the role that each organization plays, and where that fits in the overall big picture for whatever it is you’re trying to accomplish.” [public leader]*

### A Majority of Park and Recreation Leaders Views Their Agencies’ Foundation Relationships to be Strong, Close and Effective (Percentage Distribution)



### Trust, Collaboration and Clearly Defined Roles Are Necessary Conditions for Healthy and Sustainable Agency-Foundation Relationships

(Percent of Respondents Rating Condition as “Extremely” or “Very” Important)



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTERVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK PATTERSON

Park and recreation leaders further emphasize that a variety of technical skills is important in fostering a successful and sustainable agency-foundation relationship:

- Leadership and decision making (99 percent of respondents cite this as “extremely” or “very” important)
- Professionalism (97 percent)
- Interpersonal skills (97 percent)
- Communications (96 percent)
- Goal setting (88 percent)
- Conflict resolution (78 percent)

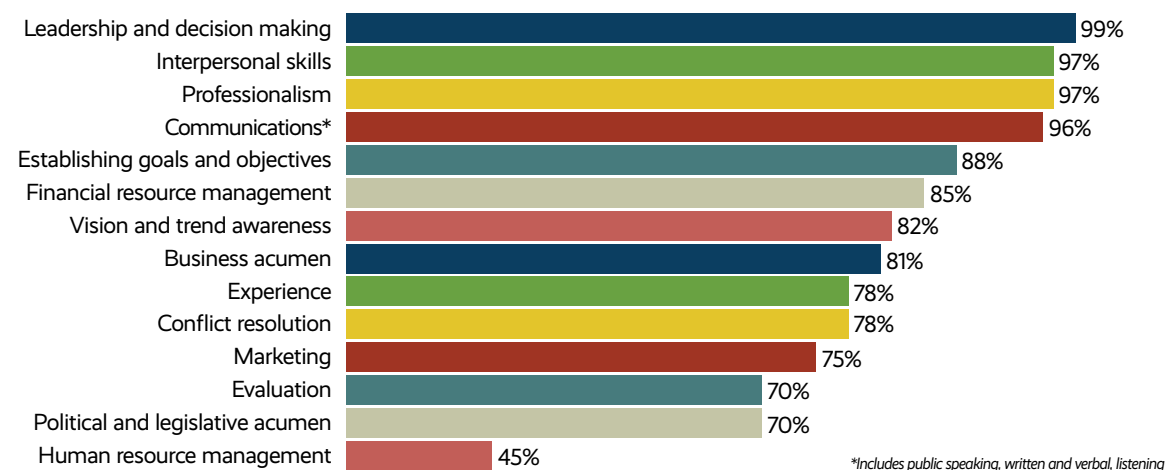
In addition, soft skills related to emotional and cultural intelligence play an important part for park and recreation employees:

- Financial resource management (85 percent of respondents cite this as “extremely” or “very” important)
- Business acumen (81 percent)
- Marketing (75 percent)
- Political and legislative acumen (70 percent)

Joe Pruitt (front center), natural and cultural resources manager for Gwinnett County (Georgia) Parks and Recreation, and his staff distributing food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Park and Recreation Leaders’ Mastery of Both Soft and Technical Skills Is Crucial for Successful and Sustainable Agency-Foundation Relationships

(Percent of Respondents Rating Skill as “Extremely” or “Very” Important)



\*Includes public speaking, written and verbal, listening

### STRONG INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS MATTER, BUT ARE NOT ENOUGH BY THEMSELVES

Leaders of both park and recreation agencies and foundations agree that developing strong interpersonal relationships is fundamental to successful and sustainable agency-foundation partnerships. In particular, respondents in vibrant agency-foundation relationships report that their interpersonal connections include clear, regular and positive communications. Conversely, less productive agency-foundation partnerships are characterized by weaker or less-positive interpersonal relationships between the organizations’ leaders.

*“It’s a terrible challenge. It’s the largest impediment to doing my job...” [foundation leader, regarding a negative interpersonal relationship]*

But healthy interpersonal relationships must not stop at the top of the organizational chart. Leaders at both agencies and foundations also stress the importance of forming organizational relationships that transcend the C-suite and permeate interactions between individuals at every level of both organizations. This is particularly important for sustainable, long-term agency-foundation relationships that must be able to outlive the departure of an agency director or the head of a foundation.



A person plays a hand-painted piano outside of the Danville (California) Senior Center.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GEOFF GILLETTE

### THERE IS NO “ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL” SOLUTION FOR AGENCY-FOUNDATION RELATIONSHIPS

Although various relationship traits or practices typify successful agency-foundation relationships, leaders at both park and recreation agencies and foundations stress that there is no “one-size-fits-all” set of best practices for agency-foundation relationships.

For example, specific strategies that are successful in one community may not always be appropriate in another community. Respondents stress that each community is unique; they cautiously apply lessons learned elsewhere using the context of their individual knowledge and experience.

*“I can’t take what I did in [municipality A] and apply it to [municipality B], and I can’t take what I did in [municipality B] and apply it here. I can take pieces of all those. But I can’t take and replicate the exact model because it just won’t work.... There isn’t a cookie-cutter approach.” [foundation leader]*

Park and recreation leaders and their counterparts at foundations and friends groups can address this challenge by building their cultural knowledge. Specifically, respondents note that it is vital for leaders to boost their understanding of the municipality, foundation and the context in which they operate. Several interview subjects note a lack of cultural knowledge as a limiting factor in the success of an agency-foundation relationship, and emphasize that no amount of technical proficiency will ensure a successful relationship.

*“I can be the most technically sound parks professional, but if I can’t figure those nuances in a community [I won’t be successful].” [foundation leader]*

## AGENCIES AND FOUNDATIONS MUST COORDINATE EFFORTS TO MAXIMIZE SUCCESS AND LIMIT COMPETITION FOR SCARCE RESOURCES

Park and recreation and foundation leaders also emphasize that open communication, cooperation and coordination between agencies and their nonprofit partners are critical in order for such relationships to reach their full potential. In general, more successful agency-foundation relationships are characterized by more frequent contact. Communication between agencies and foundations occurs about once a month on average, and two in five park and recreation leaders note that they interact with their foundations at least once a week.

The benefits of communication are multifaceted. Interview subjects note that regular, purposeful communication between the organizations is necessary to ensure alignment of funding priorities. This includes both formal communication — focused on official business — and informal, interpersonal interactions between the leadership and support staff of both organizations.

*“We’d have the park board meeting start at 7 p.m., so we bring everybody in at 6 p.m., feed them, and let them chat and talk about [how] ‘this is the direction that the department’s going. Where would you as foundation board members see yourselves being able to help get some funding going for specific projects...’ So, I think that’s what really is the only string that’s holding the two together right now.” [public leader]*

Regular communication is also a strategy to avoid unnecessary competition between agencies and foundations for scarce resources in a community. Both agency directors and foundation leaders note financial resources (from donors) are often limited and caution agencies and foundations to avoid reaching out to the same donor network.

Beyond financial resources, agencies and foundations should seek to:

- *Work to avoid attention fatigue or annoyance* with park and recreation-related causes. Donors have limited time, patience and attention, and also may be receiving solicitations from other community causes and organizations. Agencies and foundations should coordinate their communication schedules and avoid soliciting the same donors over and over again.
- *Avoid competition for volunteers* who may be called on repeatedly by both agencies and foundations to do the “on the ground” work for projects and initiatives.
- *Avoid competition for board members.* Do not inadvertently ask the same individuals to serve on both foundation and park advisory boards. Agencies and foundations should coordinate and communicate about potential board members to avoid overburdening key stakeholders and to ensure greater diversity on each respective board.

*“The city also had its own parks board. So it was like they had all these civic leaders who were engaged in advising on parks issues, and that board took a lot of the energy away from the parks foundation, because we needed to have a board for the parks foundation and the city had its own parks board and was doing its own fundraising. So, there just wasn’t enough food to keep the foundation strong.” [foundation leader]*

Leaders at both park and recreation agencies and foundations recommend creating a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the organizations. The MOU should clearly articulate the foundation’s role, how the organizations should facilitate coordination and cooperation, and define expectations and measures of success.

*“And, there’s just not an appetite for master planning here. I think I could raise money for it [key long-term initiative]. But every time I bring it up, the chief of staff will say, ‘Yeah, we don’t want to do a master plan. We just want to do projects.’ And so, if there were some way that NRPA could talk compellingly about the value and benefit of master planning, that would be helpful to me for sure.” [foundation leader]*



In Berea (Kentucky), meals prepared by Berea College and the Berea Community School food service are distributed with a school bus to children in need.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BEREA COLLEGE



A Harlem Wizards team member greets fans at the grand opening of newly renovated basketball courts at Summer Road Park in Whitehouse, New Jersey, during the 2019 Summer Spectacular event.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE DABOUR

## “MISSED OPPORTUNITIES” EXIST WITHIN AGENCY-FOUNDATION RELATIONSHIPS

Despite the largely positive way in which most agency and foundation leaders view their partnerships, certain “missed opportunities” exist in which the agency-foundation relationship is not being utilized to its full potential.

### Equity Remains a Largely Unresolved Challenge for Most Agency-Foundation Relationships

Many leaders at both park and recreation agencies and foundations express disappointment with the limited success they have had in addressing equity-related issues. Specifically, respondents view equity as one of the biggest unresolved challenges for their agency-foundation relationship.

*“And, we really failed. It was just not successful — a few gifts. But people care about what they know and see in their own backyard.” [foundation leader]*

In some instances, addressing equity-related issues is a primary motivation for the establishment of a foundation. A nonprofit organization’s ability to fundraise and allocate resources in a more flexible and entrepreneurial fashion, *specifically targeting underserved populations/areas*, is key to the mission of these organizations.

However, interview subjects note that there is often a significant disconnect between where funding *comes from* in the community and where funding *is needed* in the community. More specifically, many foundations and friends groups find more success fundraising for projects concentrated in affluent areas and otherwise well-served communities. As a result, foundation efforts do not always benefit underserved communities in an equitable fashion.

*“It turns out, usually the people who have the ability to advocate for themselves with a nonprofit like this are the ones who are not living in the neighborhoods with the parks that haven’t been maintained in 20 years and that sort of thing. So the inequity...is a cycle and it grows.” [public leader]*

**Foundations Can and Must Do More to Advocate for Parks and Recreation-Related Causes in Their Communities**

Park and recreation leaders consistently identify foundations and friends groups as important advocates for park and recreation-related causes. The capacity to advocate on political issues, such as bond initiatives or referenda, is a key strength for foundations due to their greater flexibility as non-government entities. This can be particularly critical, as many agency leaders are unable to publicly lobby local political leaders on their agency's behalf.

*"I think getting more information out and being seen as an essential service was by far what our department really needed."* [public leader]

*"I think the main role for the parks foundation was to raise money for things that weren't funded well. And, we also serve as an advocate and cheerleader for better public funding for the park system."* [foundation leader]

However, only a quarter of agency leaders perceive their agencies' foundations as "very" or "extremely" important contributors in this regard. With this in mind, foundations must do more to maximize their potential role as an advocate of park-related causes in the community. As with other forms of communication, agencies and foundations should coordinate their efforts, utilize a purposive strategy, set concrete goals and objectives, and clearly define each partner's role.



Dancers perform at the Plano (Texas) Urban Dance Movement competition at McCall Plaza.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PLANO PARKS AND RECREATION



Children play at the spray park playground at Keith Mione Community Park in Mundelein, Illinois.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DEEB ENGDAAHL

**Rural Areas and Small Towns Might be Missing Out on the Benefits of Agency-Foundation Relationships**

The differences between agencies and communities with and without foundations point to another potential missed opportunity. In general, foundations and friends groups are more common in more populated urban and suburban communities; they typically support park and recreation agencies that offer more amenities and enjoy larger operating and capital budgets.

As such, smaller communities may be missing out on the benefits provided by a vibrant agency-foundation

relationship. While some smaller agencies and communities without a park and recreation-specific foundation can call on other, more general, community-based organizations, parks and recreation in these communities has to compete with other worthy causes for attention and support. Given the benefits of agency-foundation relationships, agencies serving smaller communities may wish to work toward establishing a park and recreation-specific foundation. As the agency-foundation relationship potentially becomes more important in the years to come, this may mean that the disparity between agencies with and without foundations could continue to grow.

**Park and Recreation Agencies Tend to Serve Larger Populations, Offer Greater Amenities and Have Larger Operating Budgets (Mean Values)**

	Agency Supported by a Foundation	Agency Not Supported by a Foundation
Population served	302,640	120,177
Acres of parkland managed	6,088	1,340
Parks and facilities managed	46	24
Annual operating budget	\$14.1 million	\$6.9 million

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Relationships between local park and recreation agencies and nonprofit foundations or friends groups often provide a number of benefits to a variety of stakeholder groups. Their capacity to fundraise for goods and services beyond the usual scope of a government agency, and their flexibility and responsiveness as nongovernment entities make these nonprofit partners powerful allies for many local park and recreation agencies. Overall, leaders from both the public and nonprofit sectors perceive these relationships as strong, close and effective, and, generally, agree on the characteristics and competencies that ensure an efficacious agency-foundation partnership. Despite the potential benefits, however, several areas exist as opportunities to further enhance the relationship between these organizations. In particular, equity is a vexing, unresolved challenge for many agency-foundation relationships.

It is important to note that the role of nonprofit foundations and friends groups may only become more prominent in the years to come as agencies grapple with the financial implications of the Great Recession, COVID-19 pandemic and future crises. This growing importance highlights the need for evidence-based best practices to maximize the efficacy of the agency-foundation relationship. While this research represents a first step in that direction, much remains unknown. Future research must continue to examine these public-private partnerships, with the goal of providing guidance to individuals and organizations on both sides of the relationship.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HONOLULU DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The closing ceremony for the 92nd annual Lei Day Celebration in Honolulu, Hawaii, is a spectacle of Hawaiian culture and a way to remember Hawaiian royalty at the Royal Mausoleum (Mauna 'Ala).

## ABOUT NRPA



A waterfall flows on the Chagrin River at South Chagrin Reservation near Henry Church Rock in Bentleyville, Ohio.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KYLE LANZER/CLEVELAND METROPARKS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to building strong, vibrant and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. With more than 60,000 members, NRPA advances this mission by investing in and championing the work of park and recreation professionals and advocates — the catalysts for positive change in service of equity, climate-readiness, and overall health and well-being.

NRPA places immense importance on research and data to raise the status of parks and recreation and conducts research with two goals. First, NRPA creates data to help park and recreation agencies make optimal decisions on operations, programming and spending. Second, NRPA generates data and insights that support park and recreation professionals in making the case for greater and more stable funding to policymakers, key stakeholders, the media and the general public. The NRPA research team works closely with internal subject matter experts, respected industry consultants and members of the academic community to develop its reports and data resources. Learn more at [nrpa.org/Research](https://nrpa.org/Research).

NRPA brings strength to our message by partnering with like-minded organizations, including those in the federal government, nonprofits and commercial enterprises. Funded through dues, grants, registrations and charitable contributions, NRPA produces research, education and policy initiatives for our members that ultimately enrich the communities they serve.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research conducted for this report was led by Dr. Nick Pitas of the State University of New York-Brockport and was supported by Dr. Andrew Mowen and Samantha Powers of the Pennsylvania State University. The researchers express their appreciation to the park and recreation agency leaders who participated in the survey and the leaders of both park and recreation agencies and nonprofit foundations who shared their insights during the in-depth interviews.

Thank you to Kevin Roth, Gina Mullins-Cohen, Vitisia Paynich, Roxanne Sutton, Melissa May, Lindsay Hogeboom, Jennifer Fulcher-Nguyen, Kim Mabon and Kate Anderson for making this report possible. Also, thank you to those who contributed the photos included throughout.

# APPENDIX C:

## RECOMMENDED REPORT AND PERFORMANCE METRICS

### **PURPOSE AND CONTEXT**

A recurring challenge identified during the master planning process was the limited availability of consistent historical data and the absence of standardized systems to track participation, financial performance, facility usage, and maintenance activity. This appendix outlines recommended reports and metrics that will support improved decision-making, transparency, and long-term system sustainability. Several of the recommended reports emphasize tracking staff hours by location and function, recognizing that staffing capacity is a primary driver of service quality, maintenance sustainability, and customer experience.

The recommended metrics are intentionally detailed. While not all reports need to be implemented immediately, they provide a roadmap for building a comprehensive reporting framework over time as staffing capacity and software systems allow.

### **Recreation Programs and General Operations**

#### **Program Participation Report**

Track total registrations by program, participation by age group, drop-in and registered participation by activity, cancellations, and waitlists. Summarize quarterly and annually.

#### **Cost Recovery and Subsidy Report**

Track direct program revenues, direct expenses, and cost recovery percentages by program category. Prepare annually.

#### **Customer Satisfaction Summary**

Track post-program and seasonal satisfaction survey results and qualitative feedback. Compile annually. Establish a standardized participant survey to be administered at the end of most, if not all, programs. Survey questions should be thoughtfully developed in advance and include consistent questions over time to support reliable data analysis, trend analysis and informed decision-making.

Where feasible, staff hours associated with program delivery, setup, supervision, and cleanup should be tracked separately from administrative and customer service functions to better understand true program costs.

### **Parks System**

#### **Park Asset Inventory and Condition Report**

Maintain an inventory of playgrounds, shelters, restrooms, irrigation systems, trails, cemetery headstones, athletic fields, and paved areas with condition ratings. Update annually.

#### **Maintenance Workload and Resource Allocation Report**

Track staff hours by park, facility, and activity type (e.g., mowing, irrigation, repairs, event support, setup/tear-down), including both routine maintenance and reactive work. Summarize quarterly with an annual roll-up to identify workload patterns, staffing gaps, and maintenance demands.

#### **Park Usage and Event Tracking**

Track permitted events, athletic field reservations, and attendance estimates where feasible. Summarize annually.

### **Athletic Fields & Sites**

#### **Field Utilization Report**

Track scheduled use hours by field, user type, and peak versus off-peak usage. Summarize seasonally and annually.

#### **Field Condition and Downtime Log**

Track closures, turf recovery periods, and maintenance interventions. Maintain ongoing logs with annual summaries.

**Swimming Pool and Aquatics****Attendance and Usage Report**

Track daily admissions, attendance by season, swim lesson participation, and special events. Compile seasonally.

**Aquatics Financial Performance Report**

Track admissions, lessons, concessions revenue, staffing costs, and operating expenses. Compile seasonally and annually.

**Concessions Operations Report**

Track gross sales, cost of goods sold, labor hours, and inventory shrinkage. Compile seasonally and annually.

**Pool Infrastructure and Utility Report**

Track water consumption, chemical usage, energy usage if available, and major maintenance issues. Compile annually.

**Community Center****Facility Usage Report**

Track daily check-ins, program participation, rentals, and peak usage times. Summarize monthly and annually.

**Cost Reporting & Staffing**

Track full-time and part-time staff hours by function, including front-desk coverage, customer service, program instruction/support, supervision, and facility maintenance. Identify coverage gaps, overtime usage, and peak demand periods. Summarize quarterly with an annual overview.

Develop a simple tracking and reporting system that shows the true cost of each program (such as those within the gym such as sports, pool, or recreation classes). This system should include both:

- Direct costs (instructors, supplies, materials)
- Indirect costs (utilities, facility expenses, insurance, and administrative staff), so staff can clearly see what each program costs to operate.

**Facility Financial Performance Report**

Track membership, program, rental revenues, and operating expenses. Compile annually.

**Systemwide Reporting****Annual Parks and Recreation Report**

Compile participation highlights, financial summaries, maintenance activity, capital investments, and performance trends annually.

The timely development and implementation of these reporting and performance measurement systems will enable the City to make more informed decisions regarding how parks and recreation resources are allocated and managed. Consistent tracking of participation, facility usage, financial performance, and staff time will provide greater clarity around service demand, operational efficiency, and maintenance needs.

Equally important, these systems will allow the City to clearly document when existing resources are sufficient and when additional staffing, funding, or capital investment may be warranted. Over time, the use of standardized reports will strengthen transparency, support data-driven budgeting and policy decisions, improve long-term planning, and create institutional knowledge that benefits both staff and City leadership. As tracking systems mature, the City will be better positioned to adapt services, demonstrate community value, and steward public assets responsibly.

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# APPENDIX D:

## AQUATICS

### POOL OPERATIONS

Recent changes to pool water disinfection methods and operating conditions have implications for safety, water quality consistency, and long-term operating costs. The following information summarizes current pool operations and identifies opportunities to improve efficiency, safety, and sustainability through targeted operational and capital improvements.

The pool recently transitioned from gas chlorine to a chlorine-based pellet system, commonly referred to as a “puck” system. While this disinfection method improves safety by eliminating the need for gas chlorine, it requires the use of muriatic acid to maintain proper pH balance. Staff reported that overall chemical costs increased following implementation of the pellet system.

At present, chemicals are broadcast into the water, which can result in fluctuations in water quality. Installation of an automated chemical feeder for both the pellet system and muriatic acid would improve consistency, reduce chemical spikes, and enhance overall water quality control.

The room housing pool chemicals should also be adequately ventilated. Chlorine pellets off-gas chlorine over time, and proper ventilation is important for staff safety and chemical effectiveness. In addition, pellet potency can degrade over time if storage conditions are not well controlled.

#### Recommendations:

- Install an automated chemical feeder system to improve water quality consistency and chemical efficiency.
- Add shade structures to the pool deck to improve user comfort and reduce heat exposure.
- Consider the use of a pool blanket to reduce evaporation and overnight heat loss.
- Explore partnerships with the local business community to support special events or programming at the pool.
- Plan for replacement of the pool liner, tentatively identified within the 2027/2028 Capital Improvement Program timeframe.

### CONCESSION OPERATIONS

In reviewing the concession stand within the overall pool operation there are several recommendations that should be considered moving forward with the pool operations.

The concession stand should be a profit center within the overall pool budget. Based on 2024 statistics that does not appear to be happening. To illustrate, in 2024 the concession stand reported cost of goods sold was \$20,795 and total concession revenue of \$23,114. However, there was no tracking of concession labor provided. On the surface it would seem the concession operation made a profit of \$2,319. A closer examination indicates that since labor costs were not included in the concession operation the concession stand was NOT a profit center for the overall pool operations.

The Lamar results are similar to what we see at numerous park and recreation agencies that operate their concession stand as a service instead of a business. To be a solvent financial model the concession stand must follow a specific formula for success. Food costs must be at or lower than 30% of sales, Labor costs should be at or below 30%, other overhead costs must be at or below 10%. Following this formula will net the operator a 40% return on investment (profit). The bottom line is impacted directly if the formula is not followed. For example, if food costs are 40%, labor costs at 40% and overhead at 10% will only net a 10% return. The concession stand must be operated as a business to be solvent and to contribute to the fiscal health of the pool budget.

A successful concession stand also requires inventory control. There should be an inventory taken at the beginning of the season. All purchases over the season should be added to the inventory. Lastly a season ending inventory should be conducted and subtracted to the beginning inventory plus purchases. The difference represents the cost of goods sold.

Menu pricing should be reviewed and adjusted to improve the financial performance of pool concessions. Several current items are priced below levels typically needed to support a financially sustainable concession operation. For example, candy bars are currently sold for \$2.00 each. Using a wholesale pricing model such as Costco, a case of candy bars costs approximately \$58.72, or about \$1.22 per item. At the current sale price, the food cost represents approximately 61 percent of the retail price, which is well above the typical food cost target of approximately 30 percent.

To meet a 30 percent food cost target, an item with a \$1.22 unit cost would need to be priced at approximately \$4.00 ( $\$1.22 \div 0.30 = \$4.07$ ). Even pricing the item at \$3.75 would significantly improve cost recovery compared to current pricing. Similar conditions exist for other items, such as Rice Krispie Treats, which currently have an estimated food cost of approximately 50 percent and would also require price adjustments to align with standard food cost targets. To address these issues, menu pricing should be reviewed annually prior to the start of each pool season. Prices should be adjusted to reflect current product costs and established food cost targets, improving the ability of concessions to operate more sustainably and contribute positively to overall pool operations.

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# APPENDIX E:

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The following implementation table translates the recommendations of this master plan into actionable items with defined timeframes. The table is intended to serve as a roadmap rather than a fixed work plan, recognizing current staffing levels, financial capacity, and the evolving nature of community needs.

Timeframes are organized to reflect relative priority and feasibility. Short-Term actions focus on foundational improvements, safety, and operational sustainability. Medium-Term actions require additional planning, coordination, or funding. Long-Term actions represent larger capital or system-expansion initiatives. Ongoing actions reflect continuous responsibilities necessary to maintain service quality and system stewardship.

This table should be revisited annually as part of the City's budgeting and work planning process and updated as data collection and tracking systems improve.

Category	Action Item	Timeframe	Notes / Rationale
Parks	Develop and implement a preventative maintenance and asset management program	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Foundational system needed to support sustainability and budgeting
Parks	Improve shade, restroom facilities, and seating at high-use parks	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Enhances user comfort and accessibility
Parks	Improve wayfinding and signage at North Gateway Park	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Improves visibility and access
Parks	Conduct drainage assessment at Escondido Sports Field	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Addresses field usability and maintenance issues
Parks	Formalize partnership agreement with Lamar Community College	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Clarifies responsibilities and reduces risk
Parks	Add shade, parking, and ADA improvements at Escondido	Medium-Term (3-5 Years)	Improves usability and compliance
Parks	Evaluate repurposing of underutilized park amenities	Medium-Term (3-5 Years)	Aligns amenities with demand
Recreation	Expand non-sport programming for seniors, adults, and arts-based users	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Improves equity and participation
Recreation	Implement Tyler software with recreation-specific configuration	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Improves tracking and reporting
Recreation	Establish standardized participation and financial reporting metrics	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Addresses data gaps identified during planning
Recreation	Expand programming based on collected participation data	Medium-Term (3-5 Years)	Data-informed program growth
Recreation	Evaluate future indoor recreation space needs	Long-Term (5-10 Years)	Dependent on demand and capacity

Swimming Pool	Install automated chemical feeder system and improve ventilation	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Improves safety and operational stability
Swimming Pool	Implement concession inventory control and pricing review	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Moves concessions toward financial sustainability
Swimming Pool	Review pool rental and fee policies annually	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Aligns fees with operating costs
Swimming Pool	Plan phased pool liner and concrete repairs	Medium-Term (3-5 Years)	Addresses known infrastructure needs
Swimming Pool	Defer indoor pool consideration unless conditions change	Long-Term (5-10 Years)	Not feasible under current conditions
Community Center	Revise staffing model to improve front-desk coverage	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Improves operational efficiency
Community Center	Address gym lighting access and safety issues	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Reduces risk and downtime
Community Center	Replace aging fitness equipment	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Supports user experience
Community Center	Begin phased interior modernization	Medium-Term (3-5 Years)	Improves functionality and longevity
Community Center	Formalize emergency operations role and infrastructure	Medium-Term (3-5 Years)	Strengthens community resilience
Community Center	Undertake major facility modernization or expansion	Long-Term (5-10 Years)	Dependent on funding and demand
Systemwide	Maintain ongoing data collection and performance evaluation	Ongoing	Supports informed decision-making
Systemwide	Conduct annual review of fees, policies, and service levels	Ongoing	Ensures alignment with community and financial goals
Recreation	Expand programming based on collected participation data	Medium-Term (3-5 Years)	Data-informed program growth
Recreation	Evaluate future indoor recreation space needs	Long-Term (5-10 Years)	Dependent on demand and capacity

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